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ABSTRACT

The report discusses the conceptual framework of a study, built around three central ideas: the type of social entity in which women predominantly carry out their activities, sexual stereotypes, and cultural norms. The report discusses the class situation of women, and updates the information regarding the situation of women in education, employment, health, housing, political participation, legislation, and public administration. It also incorporates new areas such as environment, energy, and science and technology. Notes and a four-page bibliography are included. (SY)

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LATIN AMERICA: ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS AFFECTING WOMEN IN VARIOUS SECTORS

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CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	2
1. The type of social entity comprised by women	2
2. The reproduction of the population, domestic units and the situation of women	4
3. Sexual stereotypes and cultural patterns	6
II. VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE SITUATION OF WOMEN	8
A. CLASS SITUATION, FAMILIES AND THE SITUATION OF WOMEN	8
(a) The rural wage earner	9
(b) Small-scale agricultural production	10
(c) Medium-scale agricultural production	11
(d) Urban marginality	12
(e) The urban middle strata	13
(f) The urban upper classes	14
B. THE SITUATION OF WOMEN: PROBLEMS BY SECTORS	14
1. Education	15
(a) The evolution of enrolment in the whole region	15
(b) Literacy	17
(c) Co-education	18
(d) The content of formal education	18
(e) Non-formal education	19
2. Occupation and employment	20
(a) Female work and its measurement	21
(b) Overall female participation in the labour market	22
(c) Characteristics of female participation in the labour market	23
(d) Female unemployment	28
(e) Sexual stereotypes and the economic participation of women and its consequences	29
3. Health	32
4. Housing	34
5. Political participation	37
6. Legislation and administrative machinery	39
C. NEW ASPECTS TO BE INCORPORATED: ENERGY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT	40
1. Energy	41
2. Science and technology	42
3. The environment and human settlements	43
Notes	44
Bibliography	48

/INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to make some contributions to the evaluation of the situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean in compliance with the relevant mandates especially emanating from the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development (RPA), adopted at the First Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, Havana, Cuba, 13-17 June 1977,*/ and the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women, adopted at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, 14-30 July 1980,**/ endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.***/ In addition, this document takes into consideration the resolution adopted by the General Assembly ****/ in relation to the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, whose text contains a series of measures to be considered for the improvement of the condition of women.

This evaluative study continues the line of work initiated by the secretariat in 1979 with the documents on the situation of women in Latin America in relation to compliance with the mandates of the RPA for the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America held in Macuto, Venezuela, on 12-16 November 1979.*****/ The report updates the information regarding the situation of women in relevant sectors considered previously, such as education, employment, health, housing, political participation, legislation and administrative machinery. It also incorporates new areas such as the environment, energy, science and technology, as related to past experiences. Finally, it deepens and broadens the conceptual framework needed to develop the subject, especially in regard to class and family situations as they relate to the condition of women.

The purpose of this study, in addition to complying with the mandates, is to serve as a document for discussion among persons interested in a more equitable development and thus in the improvement of the situation of women in the region, to act as a form of technical assistance which will be useful to the governments and other organizations in their own evaluative exercises, and, finally, to contribute ideas which will encourage the search for new forms of action and knowledge which will make it possible to work more effectively towards the accomplishment of the objectives established in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

/I. CONCEPTUAL

I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to past experience, an adequate conceptual framework for making diagnoses and proposing policies and actions relating to the situation of women and their integration in development is built around three central ideas: the type of social entity which women comprise; the structural location of the domestic units, since women predominantly carry out their activities in them; and sexual stereotypes and cultural norms.

These subjects should be dealt with in view of the profound changes which have occurred in the region during the past thirty years and should fit in with the trends anticipated for this decade and the proposals of the International Development Strategy.

In addition, the accumulated background data makes it seem advisable to continue trying to achieve an integrated and dynamic approach to the problems posed by the situation of women, making it possible to go beyond the partialized, sectoral and static approaches.

1. The type of social entity comprised by women

Women join together to form groups, but the total of the women of a society does not constitute a group, since there is no relatively exclusive interaction among them within a given context, nor is there a collective perception of this interaction; neither do they pursue their own, interdependent ends, and they lack standards to regulate the operation of the group.

On the other hand, the various groups in which the society is stratified (castes, estates, strata, classes, class situation) include the entire population, both men and women, and they result from the structural, historical and cultural characteristics of its development. In Latin America and the Caribbean, societies stratified by social class predominate -with some estate-related residues-, which have been subject to an intense process of change in the past thirty years.

Although women (or men) are not a group, stratum, estate, class or class situation, they belong to one of these groups in the society in which they live. Consequently, their situation cannot be adequately described without taking into account these groups, and only in this way can a connection be established between this situation and the historical development of the society. Women, therefore, are groups of individuals defined by the class situation to which they belong and by the roles assigned to them within it based on the biological fact of sex.

Membership in a class situation is also subject to a dual dynamism, one due to the redefinitions of the class situations resulting from the social process, and the other due to some basic facts of the life cycle:

(a) Before the average age of incorporation into the labour force or before the incorporation into paid activities in the labour market. In this case the class situation of the individuals is that of the domestic group to which they belong, and the insertion of the head of household in the socioeconomic system determines the class situation of all the members of the household;

/(b) After

(b) After the average age of incorporation into the labour force or after the incorporation into paid activities in the labour force and until the first marital union. Here we may distinguish two cases: (i) those who do not have paid jobs will continue to depend upon the head of household and will belong to his or her same class situation; (ii) those who are incorporated into paid activities in the labour force will belong to a class situation either equal to or different from that of the head of household, even though they may continue to live in the household.

(c) After the marital union. In this stage, the various ways of defining who is the head of household must be taken into account, according to the preponderant family organization. If the woman is not incorporated into a paid economic activity and economically depends on the head of household, she will belong to the same class situation as the latter, whatever her original class situation.

(d) After the dissolution of a marital union, for whatever reason (separation, widowhood, etc.). In these conditions the woman normally becomes head of household, and her insertion in the socioeconomic structure determines her class situation and that of her dependents.

It may be stated, then, that the problem of "women" exists only in abstract form, and the approaches referring to "the" integration of "women" in development, "the" image of "women", "women" in the labour market, etc., are also abstract. What does exist, concretely, are the problems of the various groups of women, defined according to the dual determination of the class situation to which they belong and the social situation corresponding to them according to this class situation.

In brief, the situation of women gives rise to two major types of problems:

(a) those which are common to all individuals (men and women) belonging to the same class situation: housing, employment, education, health, income, personal development, etc. -problems which in some cases are aggravated for women because of sexual stereotypes; and

(b) those which are specific to women, arising from their social role according to the class situation to which they belong, the conditions in which they perform activities related to their responsibility for the domestic units as regards the reproduction and maintenance of their members and as a specification of the general cultural norms.

This does not mean to imply that the situation of women can only be improved if there occurs a redefinition of the situations of class and social organization of the reproduction and maintenance of the population. A radical change in the situation of women assumes a radical change also in that organization, which in turn assumes a radical change in the predominant styles of development in the region.

Meanwhile, something can and must be done to improve the situation in which women live, and public policy guidelines should be consistent with the conceptual framework which serves as their basis.

/2. The

2. The reproduction of the population, domestic units and the situation of women

In the region, there has been almost an exclusive concern with economic growth, its components and the behaviour of the various economic variables and units. But just as any economic system produces goods and services and generates the conditions for its own reproduction as a system, any socioeconomic system produces, reproduces and maintains its population, although this aspect, closely related with the quality of life of individuals, has either been ignored or relegated to a secondary level.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the production, reproduction and maintenance of the life of the population is still preponderantly carried out in domestic units, which in some ways is shown by the low percentage of persons living in single-person or non-family census households.

According to their class situation, domestic units obtain the goods and services they use for the reproduction and maintenance of their members in various ways: by acquisition in the market; by their own production; by provision or donation from public or private bodies or from other family units. The proportion of goods and services which they obtain from these various sources also varies historically and according to the degree of economic development of the societies. It may thus be maintained that the higher the level of economic development and socioeconomic stratum to which the domestic units belong, the greater the proportion of goods and services that will be acquired in the market and the less that will be produced in the unit itself.

The fact that domestic units do not carry out directly all the activities required indicates that there is a process of social specialization, and thus there are social institutions and agencies which carry them out: educational organizations, health services, building and transport enterprises, inter alia. The result of this growing specialization of social activities is that relations are necessarily established between the domestic units and the specialized agencies.

Circuits of need satisfaction are thus defined which include the demand for goods and services on the part of the domestic units as well as the supply of these goods and services on the part of the various types of units: individuals, agencies, institutions.

In view of the prevailing styles of development in the region, extremely unequal circuits of need satisfaction coexist for the different goods and services, and the domestic units belonging to the various class situations have differential access to them. Latin American societies have a high degree of structural heterogeneity not only in their economies, but also in the production, reproduction and maintenance of the population.

Given this form of social organization for dealing with the production, reproduction and maintenance of the life of the population, the domestic units of the various class situations, in order to meet their responsibility with respect to their members, use different strategies which include, inter alia, different aspects of the division of labour by sex and age, in the units themselves and in the participation of their members into paid economic activities. For the domestic units of the lower rural and urban strata, this fact results in seasonal or permanent migrations, the early incorporation of children into paid labour, the dual burden of female work, etc.

/This form

This form of social organization of the production and reproduction of the life of the population has at least two important connections with the economic system: (a) unpaid domestic labour is not included in the costs of reproduction of the labour force, which has an influence on the decrease in the value of wages and thus on the increase in the surplus; (b) the effective aggregate demand of the domestic units of the various class situations, such as results from the various circuits of need satisfaction in which they participate, has a differential specific weight in the feedback of the whole system and accordingly in the orientation of the growth of the productive apparatus.1/

Women, for their part, also produce and reproduce their life through domestic units, according to the class situation of these units and according to the circuits of need satisfaction in which they participate. Although in this area there do not appear to be substantial differences between the two sexes, it should be recalled that, especially in the least favoured strata of the population, even holding constant the type of domestic unit, women appear to have fewer opportunities and to be subject to discrimination in various forms (education, nutrition, personal development).

Just as the domestic units are responsible for the production and reproduction of their members, adult women are responsible for the operation of the domestic units. The low female participation in paid labour should be considered, thus, not as a product of discrimination or inequality with respect to men, but rather as a result of the social organization of the production, reproduction and maintenance of the life of the population. From this point of view, women have always been integrated and connected with the development of the societies in which they live. It is not clear that this integration and connection have been unsatisfactory or inconvenient for these women and for the society, although this role of women in the social structure has certainly obstructed, limited or prevented their participation in other spheres of activity, particularly in paid work.

Finally, according to the class situation to which their domestic unit belongs, women participate in the market also in the labour force which is paid for its products or services, which brings up the problem of the double work day or the possibility of other arrangements for taking care of domestic tasks.

As a result, domestic labour is a crucial point for understanding the situation of women. In the conditions predominating in the region, this work generally: (i) is done in isolation in each domestic unit, which leads to relative social isolation for those who do it; (ii) it is primarily manual and makes intensive use of labour; this in itself, and in conjunction with the previous characteristic, means there is no personal development for the individual who does it; (iii) it consists of very different, usually relatively low skill activities which do not require formal training, can be done by persons totally lacking in education, who are thus easily replaceable; and (iv) it is primarily free, or poorly paid. The question of why one would accept to do work with these characteristics goes back, first, to strong ideological components which allow individuals living in societies oriented towards money the legitimation of their own condition as free workers and, second, to the work options of individuals with little or no skill who need to work, in the face of labour markets which are constantly raising the educational requirements for labour.

/Thus, while

Thus, while the society assigns the responsibility of producing, reproducing and maintaining the life of the population to domestic units, and to women the responsibility of operating these units, the series of features characterizing domestic activities tends to play down its social importance.

However, domestic chores are labour from various points of view. From the point of view of the domestic unit itself, because they produce goods and services for the consumption of all the members and in some cases for the production and economic reproduction of the family unit. From the social point of view, because they produce and maintain, totally or partially, day after day and generation after generation, the life of the population and because, in many cases (own-account workers, small farmers), they produce goods for the market or include tasks related to the production of these goods. The fact that a large part of domestic labour results in the production of goods and services which are used values which do not enter the market does not imply that it is not useful and necessary work.

Taking into account the characteristics of the present social organization of the reproduction, production and maintenance of the life of the population and the participation and responsibility of women in the domestic labour this implies, it is clear that encouraging the participation of women in the labour market means facing the problem of the double work day or double burden, which many women of the region who belong to the least favoured class situations already have. A new role is added without any relief from the responsibility of the old role. The increase in the participation of men in domestic activities may mean relief in the tasks of the women and may change the definitions of masculine and feminine roles, but it does necessarily lead to a change in the structure of the social organization of production and maintenance of the life of the population. The increase in social services in relation to this organization may lead to some relief from domestic chores and an improvmment in the conditions in which they are carried out, but not necessarily to the exemption from the corresponding responsibilities. The increase in the type of goods and services produced socially and their coverage, however, may gradually lead to a modification of this organization.

Merely hypothesizing a change in the social organization of the production, reproduction and maintenance of the life of the population and the series of questions it poses, brings out the structural meaning of the organization which predominates at the present time and the profound implications this change would have.

3. Sexual stereotypes and cultural patterns

The postulation of the existence of a co-existing active and passive principle goes back many centuries (for example, the yin and yang of Chinese philosophy) and took the form -in various combinations- of the gods and godesses of the oldest religions. It was not assumed that one principle in itself dominated the other.

How and why these principles, which reside in the collective unconsciousness, attribute the active to man and the passive to women is a subject which remains unclear.

/In anthropology,

In anthropology, there is a consensus that the only biological determination of female and male roles is that women may become pregnant and that men make them pregnant, and that the assignment of activities to individuals beyond the biological fact of sex (so that sex is relevant or irrelevant to its association with a certain activity) will depend on certain historical conditions which must be established.

It is undeniable that there are stereotypes with respect to "feminine" and "masculine". Stereotypes, as fixed ideas applied to certain social groups, result from a tendency to produce simplified notions and to remain relatively immune to experience. Their function, inter alia, is to justify and rationalize conduct towards the social group in question, as well as to act as a selective filter which ensures the maintenance of the simplification. Social psychology has established that stereotypes, among them that of feminine or masculine, are transmitted, acquired and applied unconsciously, and that they shape to their image and likeness all experience acquired after their implantation. Upon them are built patterns, values, beliefs, images and symbols which serve to support attitudes and behaviours through which activities are assigned which are considered appropriate to one or the other sex.

It has also been established that the members of the social groups which are the objects of a stereotype, when they are treated accordingly, are eventually led, through various mechanisms, to act in the way the stereotype says they will.

In the last analysis, then, the problem lies in why and how, based on a certain elementary symbolic component, the stereotype of masculine and feminine is produced, rather than in the numerous reinforcements which these stereotypes encounter in tradition, culture, norms, publicity and mass communication media. These mechanisms only serve to maintain or reinforce a pre-existing stereotype.

Both the general features of the feminine stereotype and the various forms of discrimination in education, labour and other areas, are specific to the various class situations. These general features and forms of discrimination have a dynamic movement which is not unlike conjunctural situations and which seems, in certain situations, to be totally or partially suspended (United States and European women during the Second World War, women in national liberation armies, etc.), but is later taken up again when the critical situation is considered to be over.

In addition, it has been demonstrated that women of different social classes do not perceive in the same way that there is something unsatisfactory in the definition of their role, or on what this dissatisfaction is based. In general, women of the higher social strata focus their perception and actions on greater equality of opportunities for both sexes, while women of the lower social strata focus their perception and actions on improving the living conditions of the domestic units to which they belong.

As long as the causes of the stereotypes are not established, there only remains the possibility of acting on their content, consequences and the facts which support them.

A broad field is thus open for developing actions oriented towards raising consciousness of the lack of a real basis for many normative components of the feminine and masculine roles, and eliminating discriminations originating in these components. Some of these components are related to the dominant ideology of the national society and cut across all social classes. All receive the specifications made by the social classes about the role of women, in accordance with their particular insertion in the social structure.

II. VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE SITUATION OF WOMEN

A. CLASS SITUATION, FAMILIES AND THE SITUATION OF WOMEN

In the Regional Plan of Action, the family is considered as the nucleus which generates and transmits the values, norms and attitudes which guide the individual and collective behaviour of the members of a society, and as a mediating institution between the individual and the social group. It is also held that the division of labour established on the basis of sex and supported by traditions and customs under the pretext of biological determinism, assigns to the man the role of breadwinner and relegates the woman to a secondary and passive role limited to the narrow confines of the home and with the sole basic purpose of marriage and child-bearing. However, it is recognized that the changes in the structure and functions of the family as a result of the processes of urbanization and industrialization and its stability in relation to internal migration are not detected in most cases.2/

The important changes which have taken place in the region in the past thirty years have had an influence on the living conditions of domestic units and thus have had an effect on the situation of women.

In the population, there has been a generally declining trend in the birth rates, and life expectancy at birth has risen. However, some social sectors have maintained their fertility and, since mortality is decreasing, they have raised the average number of family members. Others, especially the middle urban strata, have managed to control their fertility, and families now have an average number of children similar to that of some developed countries. To this has been added an intense process of urbanization.

Agricultural modernization, achieved primarily through an increase in technology and concentration of land, has provided a great deal of dynamism to the rural sector and has converted broad sectors of small owners, "minifundistas" and other categories of landholders (tenant farmers, sharecroppers, etc.) into wage earners, either permanently or seasonally. These rural changes have been one of the reasons for the intense seasonal or permanent internal migrations. Agricultural modernization and migrations have had a series of consequences for the situation of domestic units, namely: modifying the composition of the population by age and sex, with its consequences on marital unions; varying the ways in which families obtain their monetary or in-kind income, with the respective effects on the sexual division of labour and the distribution of authority within the units; increasingly marketing the agricultural production in the international markets, in a context of deterioration or instability of the terms of trade; monetarizing the rural economy, with its impact on income levels. Another serious consequence has been the urban installation of the rural migrants in "misery belts", in precarious housing conditions characterized by overcrowding and environmental and sanitary problems.

Industrialization, primarily based on the intensive use of capital, has caused unemployment, accentuated the segmentation of the labour markets and modified the sectoral composition of employment. In addition, it has been centralized in large cities and its effects have spread to the rest of the country, destroying craft production and redefining subsistence economies.

/Only a

Only a small percentage of the population has been able to incorporate itself into the modern urban sector of the economy, and the State has had to intervene by generating jobs. Both facts together have resulted in the growth of the population in the middle strata of the tertiary occupations. The rest of the urban population, with little or no skills and lacking its own capital, is seeking a way of obtaining an income in sporadic occupations or in the so-called "informal sector".

In most of the countries of the region, the territory has been incorporated into the nation-State through the highway systems, means of transport, social communication media, extension of various technical and personal services, presence of police and military forces, etc.

However, the rapid rate of change in the living conditions of the family units does not appear to have meant a similar growth rate in the value contents and attitudes, patterns and ways of life referring to the family and the relations among its members in the various class situations. This is especially noteworthy in the continued existence of patterns and attitudes with respect to feminine roles and the relations of authority within the family units.

These processes together have had a differential impact on the domestic units of the various class situations and on the condition of the women in these units. Those presented below necessarily have a "typical" and general character which are a long way from covering all the individual situations.

(a) The rural wage earner

This class situation is made up of landless workers who are living on land adjacent to an agricultural enterprise, along the highways, or on the periphery of small nearby villages, in the hope of being able to establish a stable relationship with this enterpirse. These domestic units depend almost exclusively on the possibility of obtaining a monetary income. The men usually work in groups by day or by season, or they form groups which emigrate seasonally in search of work, which keeps them out of their homes for the entire day, or longer periods. The housing is very precarious, lacking all services, and the meagre family income is consumed almost entirely for the purchase of inadequate food and clothing. The most accessible service is usually education.

The female children in this class situation begin their active and fertile life very early. From the time they are small, they usually help in some domestic jobs and even in productive labour, turning any earnings over to the head of household. Often, before reaching adolescence, they emigrate to cities to find jobs as domestic workers. Under these circumstances, their entry into the educational system is usually delayed, and after poor attendance and repeating grades they abandon it definitively, with an inadequate education. In general, their nutrition is inadequate and health care almost nonexistent.

The women in this class situation, of fertile and active age -which may fluctuate between 12 and 50 years- are primarily illiterate or have a low level of schooling. They frequently have a large number of children, many of whom do not survive. Marital unions are usually considered consensual, and there are more than one for each woman. All the reproductive domestic work is their responsibility and that of the daughters who are able to help them. Given the meagre and unstable male income, it is not rare for them to participate also as wage earners in domestic labour, trade and agricultural labour, which is made more difficult or easier depending on the number and age of their children, who sometimes work with

/them in

them in the harvesting chores. The health care received by these women is minimal, as is their participation in training activities, the latter being difficult because of the lack of time due to the large number of chores for which they are responsible.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that if there is some relative, "compadre" or acquaintance who is in a better economic position, the children are often turned over to him or her. Occasionally, also, the domestic unit decides to migrate, temporarily or permanently, to other regions or to the city. In these cases, women of these ages have to adapt to the new environment, which does not usually mean an improvement in living conditions. However, due to the decrease in domestic chores in the urban areas, the possibility of finding paid work and the access to services for their children, women of these class situations generally favour migration.

In view of the instability of male labour, it is not rare to find these women as heads of household, either temporarily or permanently. In these circumstances, their living conditions deteriorate until the time when their older children become incorporated into the labour market.

After their active age, women in this class situation lack any type of social security, are supported by their children, or live alone.

(b) Small-scale agricultural production

The domestic units of this class situation have access to a small plot of land, generally of low productivity and quality. Sometimes they are owners of the plot, and other times they hold it as tenant farmers, sharecroppers, renters, etc. The income from these units are of various types: non-monetary income from their own self-subsistence production; monetary income from the sale of their product; and monetary income for the sale of their labour. As the first two are usually insufficient, the men normally have jobs outside the plot of land which imply temporary migrations. Commonly, the economic activity does not produce a surplus which would allow them to increase the technology of the farm, and so they repeat, year after year, the same crops. In general, they participate in low-quality circuits of need satisfaction in various areas, although they have some access to services, primarily educational ones. Their housing is precarious and lacks drinking water, electricity and waste disposal systems, and household equipment is rudimentary. Except in cases of temporary migration, either male or female, there is no separation between the home and the work place.

The women of this class situation do not differ very much, insofar as their situation is concerned, from those belonging to the rural wage earner group, and the differences revolve around the security provided by landholding and the various economic options offered by it. For the possession of land requires the more active participation of women in the self-subsistence production (care of the garden and small livestock), in the productive domestic labour (craft work, various agricultural chores and the production to be marketed), and social work (marketing of products and crafts, etc.). It has in fact been demonstrated that the fewer the economic possibilities of the rural domestic units, the more the support given by women and children, and the more flexible the definition of male and female roles.

Although the greater security associated with landholding is reflected in the greater stability of a series of family relations (legal unions, duration of unions, relations between parents and children and between spouses) and relatively higher standards of living, the situation of the female children is also very similar to

/that described

that described for those belonging to the domestic units of the rural wage earner. Women, for their part, frequently are heads of households, at least seasonally, although they have no title to ownership in the land, and thus have no access to credit or technical assistance, which considerably aggravates their situation.

Most indigenous rural women belong to this class situation and the preceding one. To the feminine condition is then added ethnic discrimination and cultural and linguistic problems.

(c) Medium-scale agricultural production

The domestic units belonging to this class situation own a plot of land of relatively high quality and grow a type of crop which allows them to obtain an income from the sale of their production which is not only sufficient to maintain their members but also to increase the technology applied. This gives them access to credit and technical assistance and allows them to do domestic as well as wage-earning work. Housing is relatively good, with good equipment, some system of water extraction and waste removal and in many cases access to electricity or liquid fuels. The circuits of need satisfaction in which they participate and which they demand are of higher quality than those available to the classes previously described.

The active, fertile age of the female children in this class situation is similar to that of female children in the middle urban classes. Normally they have access to the formal educational system and remain in it until completing primary level. In some countries they not only attend secondary school but also complete studies which train them as teachers. Their levels of health care are good, and it is rare that they migrate to the cities to obtain work before their active age, and if they do, they do not tend to work in domestic jobs. They usually help their mothers in the reproductive domestic work and also in tending the family garden and caring for the small livestock. They do small agricultural jobs occasionally, when the work of the other members of the unit -older children or paid labour- is insufficient.

Women of active and fertile age in this class situation share some form of decision-making with their spouses in regard to the development of the family enterprise and normally come from a similar economic unit. This experience, plus their educational level (generally literate women with primary education) and living conditions mean their situation is considerably different from that of the two previous classes. They usually have fewer children, and more of their children survive. Their marital unions are legitimate and stable. Their activity is centered on domestic work, which is less burdensome than that of women of the wage-earner and small rural producer classes, due to better housing conditions, infrastructure and equipment. The health care available to them is relatively good, normally of professional quality from the closest population centre. The family authority is usually divided into the domestic side for the women and the economic production side for the men, but the decisions are usually made by common agreement or with the knowledge of the spouse. The relative isolation of these units and their living conditions mean that the women do not participate very much in social or training activities. Family migration is not a foreseeable phenomenon, and even less likely is the turning over of children to other family members. Depending on the age of the children, these women will not have major problems if they are heads of household. After the active age, these women usually continue to receive some income from rents, pensions or retirement plans. Normally, they are the responsibility of the domestic unit of the son who has remained in charge of the family enterprise.

/(d) Urban

(d) Urban marginality

The family units of the so-called "marginal" urban sector are made up of independent workers without capital and wage earners who have sporadic jobs, with little or no training, and they support themselves by the collective contribution of their members to the family income. The contribution of persons outside the nuclear family (relatives, friends, recent immigrants), is an additional support, in terms of income or help in domestic chores. The family units of this class situation are located in different ecological contexts: overcrowded in old housing in the former centre of the city or, more typically, in peripheral popular districts, a product of the spontaneous processes of occupation or organized mobilization to claim their right to housing. The housing in these cases is self-constructed, insofar as discarded materials are used. Services are minimal: water obtained from a central fountain which serves various houses, or delivered by city trucks; absence of sewage facilities and electricity. The family fluctuates between levels of indigence and subsistence. Food and clothing use up the family consumer funds, for which the income of the head of household is not sufficient. Rarely is any amount set aside for household equipment, although credit is usually resorted to in order to buy durable consumer goods. The circuits of need satisfaction in which they participate are governmental and normally inadequate and of low quality. However, these domestic units are besieged by the messages of the communications media and by the greater social visibility of urban life. The rural origin of many of these domestic units usually poses additional problems of integration into the norms and lifestyle of the city.

Despite their urban residence, it may be maintained that the condition of female children in this class situation differs relatively little from that of young women in small-scale rural production. The level of education they reach, despite greater access to educational services, rarely exceeds primary. Their food diet is insufficient. The health services to which they have access are usually of very poor quality, and they are normally not able to acquire necessary drugs. From an early age they begin to help with domestic chores and, when necessary, take charge of them. They also frequently become domestic servants, and it is from this class situation that most of the abandoned children and those who turn to prostitution originate.

They usually participate in courses in which they are trained to do predominantly "female" jobs (hair dressing, tailoring and dressmaking, etc.).

The women in this class situation who are at the active and fertile age usually have very low levels of schooling, and many of them are complete or functional illiterates. Thus, domestic service in the home, personal services rendered in their own homes, and trade are their principal sources of income. Unlike the women from other popular urban sectors they tend to be permanently employed, since in order for the domestic unit to reach subsistence level, their contribution to the family income must be continuous. The economic instability of these units is also manifest in the instability of marital unions. The number of children tends to be high, above that of women in the other urban classes. The number and age of the children strongly conditions their opportunities for compatibilizing their domestic and social work, since unless they have someone to whom they can delegate the corresponding activities, their responsibility for these tasks and their performance falls upon them. Although domestic work is relatively less burdensome than that of the women of the rural wage earner and small-scale agricultural production classes, it is done in inadequate conditions

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and with rudimentary equipment. Their educational levels, their previous work experience and the burden of domestic labour limit their opportunities for social participation and for taking training courses. Frequently the socially impaired situation of the man is compensated for by domestic violence -often aggravated by alcoholism- whose victims are the woman or her children. In this class also it is common to turn over children to relatives who are in a better economic position. Frequently, women are heads of household.

After their active age, the women of this class usually have no social security services, and it is among these women that the largest proportion of abandoned elderly persons is found.

(e) The urban middle strata

It is well known that the urban middle strata or middle sectors include a variety of situations which generally share certain common features: the male heads of household have a relatively stable occupation or job, for which medium educational levels or some training are required, and they produce income levels which are sufficient or adaptable enough to maintain the domestic unit without its being necessary for other members to work; or at least the children do not need to work until they do not make sufficient progress in their education. They participate in a circuit of need satisfaction which gives them access to goods and services of a certain quality and solid housing, with drinking water, electricity and sewage systems and with complete domestic equipment.

The young women of the family units in this class situation are not considered of active and fertile age until they have left the formal educational system, in which they remain as long as the family economic situation or, especially, their own talents permit. It is expected that they will complete secondary school and when possible will achieve a university degree. The food and health care available to them are adequate. Except in exceptional cases, they are exempt from doing work outside the home and are only responsible for domestic work in the absence of the mother, whom they help when they have time free from their school obligations.

The women of the family units in this class situation who are of active, fertile age, have primary and secondary education. Given the characteristics and orientation of their family unit, they do not have more than two or three children and receive medical attention during pregnancy, birth and postpartum. Their marital unions are usually legitimate and durable. Their principal responsibility is the domestic work, which they carry out in relatively easy conditions and from which, if they are in a position to earn an income, they are usually able to free themselves by contracting paid domestic help. Conjugal relations are relatively egalitarian. According to the age and number of children, and based on the possibilities for organizing their time offered by domestic equipment, these women usually participate in various social activities.

After their active and fertile age, women of the urban middle classes usually have a retirement income from their own economic activity or a pension from the activity of their spouses. For the same reasons, they usually continue to have access to health services. Frequently, women from these domestic units, at this age, help with the domestic work of their married daughters, enabling the latter to incorporate themselves into the labour market.

/(f) The

(f) The urban upper classes

The domestic units of these classes control the various sources of power, prestige, income and information. Their high incomes and high capacity for saving also become the basis for a high capacity for effective consumption which takes the form of a lifestyle which is symbolically spread by the social communications media. Almost all the circuits of need satisfaction in which they participate are private, which besides being based on their buying power, reinforces their social power and prestige.

Women of these classes have many options as regards education, work and operation of their family units, depending almost exclusively on their personal decisions.

It could be held that these women do not have any socioeconomic problem, whatever their age. It is probable that they do not have any personally, or do not notice them. But if the distribution of the social product is the result of a latent struggle between the various class situations which coexist in a society, the amount of this product appropriated by these classes cannot be dissociated from the amount of the product which corresponds to the remaining classes. The heterogeneous, unequal and exclusive style of development which characterizes the region also manifest itself, in this way, in the situation of women.

By 1970, for a total of ten countries which account for 85% of the female population of the region, 40% of all households were located below the poverty line, 26% of urban households and 62% of rural households. It is not excessive to estimate roughly that the urban households which fall below the poverty line are those which have been considered here as belonging to the marginal urban sectors, and the rural households which fall below this line are those which have been considered here as belonging to the rural wage earner and small-scale agricultural production groups. Assuming that women constitute approximately 50% of the population and that the greater fertility of the class situations in poverty conditions would be offset by the higher life expectancy of the non-poor, it could be estimated that the minimal numerical volume of women living in poverty would be more than 55.6 million, corresponding to approximately 21 million in the urban areas and 34.6 million in the rural areas.

It is well known that the percentage of households below the poverty line, although it has decreased, has remained the same in absolute numbers, so that taking into account the changes which the process of urbanization between 1970 and 1980 could have caused, the preceding figures provide an approximate idea of the female population affected by the most serious problems, the effort which their attention would require and their implications for the quality of life of the present and future population.

B. THE SITUATION OF WOMEN: PROBLEMS BY SECTORS

A look at the situation of women in the region and its evolution in recent decades in various sectors (education, occupation and employment, health, housing, participation, etc.) reveals a theoretical and empirical disparity with the conceptual framework proposed, which entails serious consequences for policy purposes.

The most visible cause of this disparity lies in the way in which the information is processed and published, which in the best of cases shows breakdowns by sex, age and areas of residence. The resulting groups of female population make

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it possible to do little more than record how the situation of women has evolved with respect to themselves and in relation to the men in each sector, and make it impossible to do an integrated analysis of sectoral trends.

1. Education

The Regional Plan of Action establishes that "education is an essential factor in the economic and social development of peoples and a basic right of men and women as social beings; to receive it is therefore a principle of equity and justice which cannot be foregone without violating a universal standard".3/

The International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, for its part, holds that "education is an important element, and the provision of universal education on the broadest possible scale, the eradication or considerable reduction of illiteracy, and the closest possible realization of universal primary enrolment by the year 2000 remain major goals of all countries during the Decade. A parallel and harmonious expansion of all levels and types of education is equally necessary, keeping in view the decisive role of education and training for national development and individual fulfilment". To this it adds that this should include women's greater access to education and training.4/

The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace establishes a series of objectives and points out priority areas of action.5/

Among the actions proposed are the following: the eradication of illiteracy; the equality of access to all levels of education; increasing the incorporation of women into secondary and higher education; the adaptation of the types and quality of the supply of graduates from the educational system to the needs of the productive system; the modification of the content of the programmes and teaching texts, in order to respond to the productive activities and requirements of the daily life of women in rural areas and in marginal urban areas; and the establishment of co-education and the modification of the image of women in a positive sense.

In the light of these provisions, let us examine some of the trends which have characterized the educational systems of the region in recent decades.

(a) The evolution of enrolment in the whole region

Between 1960 and 1975 the growth rate of enrolment at all levels of education was higher than the growth rate of the school age population. The increase in the various educational levels was not similar, since while the primary level doubled its enrolment in the period, that of the secondary level tripled and that of higher education sextupled. These various behaviours are related to the levels of the population covered at the beginning of the period (already relatively high at the primary level and low at the higher level), as well as the social sectors' different capacity for pressure.

Female enrolment, at whatever level, especially at the higher level, showed a growth index that was higher than that of total enrolment and thus that of male enrolment. This phenomenon started at the beginning of the period (the five-year period 1960-1965), which indicates that the process of equalization of opportunities of access to the educational system for both sexes has already been going on in the region for at least 20 years. This process had a more accelerated rate at the higher educational level, especially since 1965, possibly due to the fact that at the other two levels it had already reached a relatively high degree of equality.

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For in 1960 already, female enrolment was 48.1% of total enrolment at the primary level and 46.4% of total enrolment at the secondary level, while it was only 29.1% of the higher level. This enrolment behaviour is probably an indication of the response to the pressures of the middle sectors to expand educational opportunities, in general, by around 1965, and later to incorporate women of these sectors in secondary and higher education.

This trend is confirmed if we consider the behaviour of the rates of schooling specific to age and sex groups in 1960-1977. While the educational rate of age group 6 to 11 years grows in absolute terms by 21.1% the educational rate of age group 12 to 17 does so by 24.3%, and that of age group 18 to 23 by 15.9%. However, in relative figures the growth rates are 31%, 51% and 112%, respectively. The result is, then, that the region, which has 22% of its population from 18 to 23 years of age registered at a university and 60% of its population from 12 to 17 years of age enrolled in secondary school, has 79% of its population from 6 to 11 years of age enrolled in primary education. This means that long before having achieved effective quality of access to primary education, it had made significant progress in enrolment in secondary and higher levels. This fact suggests that, along with the process of equalization of opportunities of access to education for both sexes, there has been a persistent exclusion of certain social groups from access to the formal educational system. These trends are consistent with the proposed conceptual framework: for certain social groups, there is a process of growing equality of access to the educational system, while the men and women of other social groups do not appear even to have access to this system.

It is interesting to analyse the enrolment behaviour in the three educational levels by country in 1970-1976. At the primary level, enrolment has been expanding in most of the countries of the region since 1960, although at a different rate in each country, both in the total number and according to area of residence.

Female enrolment has increased in almost all countries. In most of them, the rate of female education at that level has been lower than that of males. The lower the level of educational development of the countries, the greater tends to be the inequality of access to the primary level between men and women, to the detriment of the latter.

The possible sources of inequality appear to be not only in the access to the educational system but also in its results.

Once access to primary level is provided, success within the system does not appear to reveal great differences between the two sexes, and in any case, appears to show a trend towards equalization and even to greater success among women. These trends may be due to various reasons, both within and outside the educational system: greater proximity of women to the educational culture; greater participation of men of this age in paid work, etc.

At the secondary level, the gross educational rate fell in only three countries of the region, and in two of them only slightly, between 1970 and 1976. Of the 32 countries considered, the gross female enrolment rate was higher than or equal to the male rate in 18 countries in 1970 and in 22 countries in 1976.

Secondary education in the region is an almost exclusively urban phenomenon, because the rural population, particularly that belonging to the lowest strata

/(rural wage

(rural wage earners, small-scale agricultural producers), has almost no access to this level. Thus, since it is primarily female enrolment that has increased, the hypothesis is reinforced that there has been greater incorporation of the women from the middle strata into secondary education. The hypothesis is also supported that, at least in formal education, the differences are fewer between the two sexes than between the groups belonging to the various social strata.

Also in regard to secondary level, there appears to have been a trend for the gross enrolment rate to grow more slowly and show greater differences between men and women, to the detriment of the latter in the countries with least educational development.

At the university level, in 9 of the 19 countries of the region in 1980, the percentage of female enrolment rose above 40% of the total of this enrolment; in one it reached 52% and in only two was it lower than 30%. This noteworthy improvement in the situation of women with respect to access to the university is reinforced if one takes into account that only in two countries was the annual cumulative growth rate of female enrolment at this level lower than 10%.

Not all university careers are considered equally appropriate for women. The more women participate, the greater is the tendency that enrolment will occur in all areas of study. From this it should not be concluded that it is the size of female enrolment with respect to total enrolment that determines the proportions in which women enter the various careers, since this choice is basically conditioned by the social definition of the situation.

Unlike what has been observed in the careers related to juridical sciences, agrological sciences and medicine, women have an overwhelming majority in humanities and education. It may be affirmed that the raising of teacher training to the university level has been one of the most important factors in the feminization of university enrolment.

From the above it follows that the process of equalization of opportunities of access to education for both sexes has been especially noteworthy at the university level, which in view of the primarily urban nature of this teaching means that this process has especially benefited women of the middle and upper urban strata. This growing equality of access has been accompanied by greater equality of participation in the various university careers, although the female presence continues to predominate in careers which are most similar to the definition of the role of women.6/

(b) Literacy

In about 1970, in the population of 15 years of age and over in the region, one out of every four persons was illiterate, and the percentage of women in this condition was somewhat higher than that of men, in a general trend towards the reduction of illiteracy which, except in the countries with already high literacy levels, meant that the illiteracy rate between 1950 and 1970 was cut in half.

For the same period and age group, in the rural areas, there was almost one illiterate person for every two persons, and although among women there was a higher illiteracy rate, the difference between that rate and the male rate was smaller than in the urban areas, which could be explained by the greater rural-urban migration of women.7/

But there were wide variations among countries and between the residential areas of each country. Around 1970, in the urban zones of 18 countries of the region, total illiteracy fluctuated between 2.6% and 28.6%, while male illiteracy fluctuated between 2.7% and 28.6% and female between 3.3% and 47.7%.

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It can be observed that the countries with greater relative educational development show fewer differences between the illiteracy rates of the two sexes in urban areas.

The situation varies with respect to illiteracy in rural areas by sex around 1970. In this case, the range of variation increases considerably among countries, with a total fluctuating between 8.2% and 68.7%; for men, between 7.3% and 63.3%; and for women, from 8.6% to 77.7%.

In brief, with respect to the population of 15 years of age and older in the region, it may be stated that the rates of illiteracy could be listed from lower to higher according to the following groups: urban men; urban women; rural men; rural women; indigenous rural men; indigenous rural women. This trend points in the same direction as indicated in the conceptual framework: the structural heterogeneity of the countries of the region; the different circuits of need satisfaction in which the various social sectors participates; and the different situation of women according to the context in which they are inserted. The fact that these differences occur within the same national societies draws attention to the exclusive and unequal nature of the predominant styles of development.

It is possible to look at the illiteracy of the population between 15 and 24 years of age according to area of residence. In the urban areas, the situation of this age group by 1970 was significantly better than that of the total population, since the variations in the illiteracy rates fluctuated between 1.9% and 20.5% for the total, between 1.7% and 14.2% for men and between 2.0% and 26.1% for women, which implies substantial reductions in illiteracy, especially in the countries which had the highest rates.

In the rural areas, however, illiteracy continued to show high ranges of variation, since the total fluctuated between 7.8% and 60.4%, for men between 8.0% and 59.5% and for women between 7.6% and 69.1%. In comparison with the total rural population, the lower limits of the range fell slightly (from 8.2% to 7.8%), while the upper limits dropped somewhat more significantly (from 68.7% to 60.4%), with the illiteracy rate for women showing a greater decline, while that of men showed a slight increase.

(c) Co-education

Another of the objectives clearly formulated in the Regional Plan of Action is the need to establish co-education. This is considered to be an instrument for transforming male and female stereotypes, since it is assumed that it will be difficult for these stereotypes to survive when there is a direct and personal relationship between individuals of stereotyped and stereotyping groups, especially if this relationship is established at an early age.

In the region, pre-school education is almost exclusively mixed, but there is still a very small proportion of the population attending this educational level. At primary level, co-education tends to be widespread, although segregated primary schools, basically private and especially for girls, still exist. However, at secondary level, co-education exists in some countries and only in some establishments. Higher education, on the other hand, has traditionally been mixed.

(d) The content of formal education

The content of education is determined by the curricula and texts used, the conceptions, images and ideas contained in the teaching material and the

/personal relationship

personal relationship of the teachers with their students, which leads to reinforcement or repression of psychological features, attitudes and preferences. Despite the importance of these subjects, there is scant information available for dealing with them.

The curricular content of primary education is not only the same for both sexes but also is generally common to all the regions of a country, due to the predominantly centralized nature of educational systems. Common and obligatory primary education may lead to the reinforcing of already existing inequalities between the rural and urban areas, since the structural and cultural heterogeneity of the region means that there are different distances between the different social groups and the school culture.

Textbooks and, basically, books for reading tend to show women in the roles of housewife and mother, as a passive being without decision-making power. If she works in paid activities, she is usually shown as doing jobs in accordance with the female stereotype (secretarial, domestic service, fashion, nursing, teaching, cosmetology, etc.). It is thus implicitly being taught that these are the characteristics which women can and should have, as well as the jobs they can and should do.

From the curricular organization, the texts, the fact that the teachers are commonly women, and the relationship between teachers and students there appears to be developing a hidden curriculum, parallel to the explicit one, by which the school culture is probably reinforcing, by various means, female stereotypes.8/

(e) Non-formal education

Many non-formal education activities have been developed in the region, by which it is meant all those activities that have an educational purpose (as opposed to socialization processes or influences) by means of curricula unlike those used in the formal educational system. However, the lack of assessments of the projects in progress or to be carried out makes it difficult to form a judgement on a means of action which undoubtedly has special importance, particularly for the attention of the rural population.

In brief, within a widespread process of expansion of the educational system, which has been almost explosive in secondary education and especially in higher education, there has been a tendency in the region towards equality of educational opportunities between men and women which is particularly noteworthy in the middle and upper urban sectors. The differences are greater between areas of residence than between the sexes, which is one more expression of the structural heterogeneity of the region and the inequality of the circuits of need satisfaction in which the population participates.

Nevertheless, beyond the access to the educational system and its internal successes, there may remain various sources of reinforcement of sexual stereotypes, some of them inherent in this system (teaching personnel, texts, relations between teachers and students, etc.) and others from the social role assigned to women (methods of secondary school and university teaching).

/2. Occupation

2. Occupation and employment

The Regional Plan of Action holds that one of the fundamental limitations on the access of women to work, education and management responsibilities, as well as their personal development, is the excessive workload imposed upon them by domestic chores, which are wrongly viewed as the exclusive domain of women. In addition, the division of labour established on the basis of sex, and supported by tradition and customs on the pretext of biological determinism, assigns to men the role of breadwinner and relegates the women to a secondary and passive role. It is not surprising, then, that in most Latin American countries a very low percentage of women is incorporated in the labour force, and that most of them do unskilled labour and are concentrated in the services sector and especially in domestic work, including unpaid family workers.9/

To overcome this situation, the Regional Plan of Action proposes, inter alia, to formulate and implement policies designed to ensure equality of employment opportunities and equality of treatment for the working women; to adopt appropriate legal measures aimed at eliminating the obstacles impeding the greater participation of women in directly productive tasks; to place a value on female domestic activity, stating the conditions in which it is carried out and its contribution to the economy; to revalue the roles of women and men within the family, so that both share the same rights and responsibilities; and to promote positive attitudes towards female employment and to determine the cultural factors which support discrimination. Pointed out as especially critical are the cases of rural women and domestic employees, who need immediate and effective action to improve their well-being and social condition.

In addition, the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace establishes a series of objectives and priorities in relation to employment.10/

The International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, after noting that the condition of women should be substantially improved in productive employment as a fundamental element of development, and they should be permitted an even greater access to it, states that the objectives of industrialization policies should include the generation of productive jobs and the integration and participation of women under equal conditions in industrial development programmes and that, in the context of integrated rural development, the governments should promote greater integration of women in all stages of the production process.11/

The countries of the region, for their part, have resolved to formulate policies designed to reduce unemployment among youth and women, as well as to reconcile aspirations with opportunities for work; they nevertheless recognize that there is a great challenge to be faced in this area, since the evolution of employment in the region leaves much to be desired due, inter alia, to three basic facts: the spiraling growth of the availability of labour, to which should be added the large size of the economically active population which is unemployed or underemployed; the process of productive modernization, which has been carried forward by incorporating methods and techniques which continue to replace

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the labour input and to increase capital density; and the rate of economic growth, which has to be high if the desire is to promote an absorption of labour which avoids the aggravation of the problems of employment and even higher if the aim is to improve the employment situation for the society as a whole.12/

(a) Female work and its measurement

Although so-called female jobs vary from one society to another and in the various segments of the same society, in the region these jobs are different from male jobs, and this difference poses problems of interpretation which imply various types of measurements.

The fundamental characteristic of female work is diversity: free domestic work; paid domestic work; extra-domestic work. Moreover, within these categories, female work, as opposed to male work, tends to be discontinuous, part time, seasonal, in traditional sectors of the economy, in small family operations or own-account enterprises, and difficult to distinguish from domestic activities. It is not unusual for rural women to carry out more than one extra-domestic activity. In any case, the problem normally exists of making the productive and reproductive roles compatible. This marginal role attributed to women in the economy is based on the prejudices to which they are subject, and, at the same time supports the continuation of these prejudices.

The labour market selectively recruits educated, single and childless women and does so in a few occupations, preferably in some occupational categories and only in given economic sectors.

Domestic work, on the other hand, is done in isolation, is primarily manual, consists of diverse activities, requires no formal training, is predominantly free or badly paid, produces neither goods nor services which are valued in the market, and has no fixed schedules. This series of characteristics and the lack of recognition that domestic units are units of production, reproduction and maintenance of the population, means that the work which is done in them, the time which their members dedicate to these activities, the goods acquired in order to carry them out, and family capital are not taken into account. If the social importance of domestic work were recognized and -besides determining the characteristics of the activities by which income is obtained and the characteristics of the population carrying them out- if it were also determined who does a job and what it consists of, the use of female time and its crucial importance for development would become clear.

In view of the characteristics of the domestic and extra-domestic work done by women and the concepts -of paid work and labour force- which dominate the work accounted for in census information, it is not surprising that there is a widespread underestimate of female work, with biases and gaps in information. It has been held that censuses are insufficient for measuring female participation in economic activity (especially in agriculture or the category 'unpaid family') and that they present serious problems of conceptualization and comparability as to condition of activity, period of reference and minimal time of activity. Household surveys, on the other hand, although they resort to the same concept of labour force as used in the censuses, are more detailed and permit better measurement.13/

These serious limitations of information must be kept in mind in analysing female work.

/(b) Overall

(b) Overall female participation in the labour market

When women are considered either as paid workers or paid labour, the task is to distinguish first, the characteristics of the demand (evolution of sectors of activity, occupations and occupational categories) and their variation in the process of development; second, the characteristics of the supply of female labour (cohort of birth, age, marital status, number and age of children, education, class situation, status as migrant or resident, etc.) and their variations through time in the various societies and segments of it; and third, the actual participation of women in the labour market.

Industrial growth has modified the nature of occupations both in regard to branches of economic activity and categories of occupation, occupational strata and volume. Because this process has been so recent, most of the female population of the region is not likely to have had an early socialization in occupations of the so-called 'modern sector of the economy'. Agricultural modernization, which along with the previous process has accelerated temporary and permanent internal migration, and in some cases international migration, and which has substantially modified the relations between the urban and rural sectors and living conditions in the country, implies for large sectors of women of the region a relatively recent socialization in the occupations and lifestyle of the city. In addition, the process of urbanization has provided women with greater access to services and new living and working opportunities. Special attention should be drawn to the expansion of services, because of their relation to domestic work, and particularly educational services because of their impact on the propensity of women to work.

The increase in the volume of a different type of social communications has produced the effect of 'widespread and diffused modernization' with respect to consumption (with the resulting need for a higher income) and to various behaviours and attitudes, among which are those referring to the roles of the two sexes in the society. The latest systematic figures for the entire region in regard to the rate of female participation in economic activity are taken from the 1970 censuses.

From 1970 to 1980, some countries of the region have lived through extreme social and economic instability resulting from the critical situation of international relations in the world economy. The crisis in the predominant style of development in the region has become worse, and the search for other possible styles has led some countries to reinforce the concentrating, exclusive and unequal characteristics of their previous styles and to modify the employment situation for women.

There is no doubt that the changes in development have an influence on the job situation of women, but the way in which these consequences and their causes are interpreted has important policy implications. Thus, for example, according to whether one considers total or sectoral female participation, either development will be a necessary and sufficient condition for increasing female participation in employment, and only some complementary support measures will be needed, or it will be a necessary but insufficient condition for increasing this participation, and for some groups of women intervention will be necessary which goes far beyond complementary support measures.14/

It is also interesting to note the need to avoid the confusion which frequently exists between the numerical volume of the contingents of women with different characteristics and their specific tendency to participate in economic activity. Thus, single women usually make up the majority of a female labour

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force and at the same time have a tendency to do higher level paid work than married women, while widows or separated women make a smaller contribution to the female work force, although their tendency to work is greater than that of married women and approximates that of single women. A similar phenomenon occurs with respect to education: the majority contribution to the female labour force is made by women with the least education, not because of their strong tendency to enter the labour market but because, in numerical terms, they are the great majority of the female active age population.15/

With respect to the level of the total participation rates of women, it should be recognized that the majority of the countries of the region witnessed an increase in the overall female participation rate in the period between 1960 and 1970.

(c) Characteristics of female participation in the labour market

In women, age is associated with changes in marital status and the various stages in the family cycle, which unlike the case of men means taking charge of the responsibilities and chores of domestic work. It is for this reason that it has been proposed to divide women into two age groups: those which are considered 'marginal' for labour purposes, that is those between ages 15 and 19 and those over 50, and the 'central' ages, or women between the ages of 20 and 49.

In the region, of the total number of women in the labour market in 1970, 41.6% were between 10 and 24 years of age; 46.1% were between 25 and 49 and the remaining 12.3% were over 50. It would appear, then, that there is no major difference in the economic participation of young women from that of adult women. However, there is a clear relationship between the area of residence and age: while in the cities the share of young women tends to be lower than that of adult women, in the rural areas the reverse trend exists.

In respect of the female participation rates by five-year age groups around 1970, some well-known facts are confirmed: (a) the great variability that exists among countries, whatever the age group considered; and (b) the existence of a unimodal curve (with the sole exception of two countries) which rises to its highest point at the younger ages, and then decreases.

Although there is no unique and universal pattern of relationship between the level of formal education and the economic participation of women, educational achievements generally tend to function as a criterion for recruitment into the female labour market, to the benefit of the most educated. The relationship between education and employment is conditioned, among other factors, by the level of formal education of the entire population, which in turn influences the selection criteria used by employers, as well as the structure and organization of the economy and the size and structure of the labour force. In addition, the more educated a woman the more probable it is that she will remain single, that she will marry later, that when she forms a family she will delay motherhood, and that she will have fewer children. As the educational level rises, the forms of personal realization are redefined; the effect of cultural pressure on employers, spouses and educated women decrease with respect to female work outside the home; there is a rise in the opportunity cost of remaining outside the labour market, in occupational possibilities and in income aspirations; the competitive position of women in the market improves; their information on employment opportunities increases; the possibilities are greater for entering an occupation which is better paid, more gratifying and more flexible in terms of hours; and there is a diversity of options in relation to domestic work (contracting paid staff, organizing it in different ways, etc.).

/Generally speaking,

Generally speaking, a high educational level appears to spur more educated women into the labour market and keep them in it. A low educational level appears to remove them from this market and keep them out of it.16/

In the region, the educational levels of the economically active population of both sexes rose from 1960 to 1970 as expected on the basis of the expansion shown in the educational system, with the increases after seven years of schooling being especially noteworthy. Apparently, the aforementioned process of equalization of educational opportunities does not show up the same way in employment: the percentage of economically active women is greater than that of men and that of the total population, beginning in the group with four to six years of completed studies. This means that, in order to incorporate themselves into the labour market, women require more education than men. This inequality of opportunities referring to the total population is also found in the youngest groups, since for the population of 20 to 29 years of age in 16 countries of the region, men showed an activity rate of over 90% in 1970, whether they had no schooling or had completed 1 to 3 or 4 to 6 years of study.

Among women, however, the rate of participation increased as their educational levels increased. Thus, women between the ages of 20 and 29 with 4 to 6 years of completed studies almost doubled the rate of participation of those with no schooling.

The above suggests some achievements in the equality of employment opportunities between the two sexes. In the first place, since women with a low educational level are greater in number and have a tendency to participate less in the labour market and, on the other hand, men have to go out and work, whatever their level of education, these different sexual roles are of course reflected in the differences in the rates of total participation and in the specific rates by age of both sexes. In the second place, since education is highly associated with class situation, it could be concluded that besides the different employment opportunities available to women because of sexual roles, these differences are also associated with class situations and that the latter strongly accentuate the differences in each sex.

Marital status also has an impact on the income and permanency of women in the labour market. In general terms, in 1960 and 1970, married women tended to participate less than single women, widows, separated and divorced women, whose rate of participation tripled or quadrupled that of married women. The rate of participation according to marital status is greatly influenced by cultural patterns and, basically, by the social organization of the production, reproduction and maintenance of the population. It is not surprising, therefore, that given the widespread process of modernization and extension of social services which has occurred in the region, the participation of married women has begun to rise. In any case, whatever the reason, it would appear that the presence or absence of a partner is a factor which contributes to keeping women out of the economic activity more than a particular marital status.

Women heads of household, according to the available information for the period 1960 to 1970, whatever their marital status, show higher rates of participation than those who are not. Among women heads of household, the type of census household to which they belong does not appear to produce major differences in their rates of participation, whereas these differences are greater among women who are not heads of household, particularly among married women, who participate more if they are members of extended or composite households.

/In general

In general terms, there appears to be a negative relationship between the number of children and the economic participation rate of women. This trend is maintained whether or not there is a spouse in the household. Nevertheless, it has not been established whether the children reduce the participation or if the participation (or possibility of participating) reduces the number of children.

In any case, the level of the participation rate of women who do not have partners is significantly higher than that of those who do, and the differences are even greater when there are children, from which it may be concluded that the retractive effect of the presence of a partner is greater than that due to the presence of children.

It may be assumed that women with small children have a lower probability of incorporating themselves into the labour market than those who do not have children or who have older children. Other factors which may have an influence on the participation of women with children may be the presence of other adults in the household, the nature of the activity they perform, etc.

In the relations which have just been considered between the participation of women in the market and their family situation (with or without partner or children), there was no mention of the dynamic of the family units, that is, the family cycle, which has been used to explain female labour participation. In the various stages of this cycle, different needs for consumption, housing, mobility, services and various requirements for domestic work arise. On the other hand, besides conjunctural variations, male income is not constant over the entire active life, and shows tendencies for manual workers to have growing incomes up until middle age, when they decline, and for professionals to have growing incomes until the age of retirement. The conjunction of these situations and the various options for dealing with them available to the domestic units of the different class situations present women with various pressures and possibilities for economic participation and compatibilization of their role as the persons responsible for carrying out domestic work.

The rate of labour participation of women by areas of residence is lower in the rural areas than in urban areas. This difference is explained by the greater occupational opportunities, greater profitability, greater demand for domestic services, selectivity of migrations, and a more permissive attitude towards the work of women in urban zones. It is perhaps in the measurement of the work of rural women that the deficiency in census data is most obvious.

This brief allusion to the rates of participation according to area of residence brings up the problem of female migrations. In Latin America, migration is predominantly female, especially in rural-urban migrations, and this tendency is becoming stronger with time. To the factors of expulsion which affect the whole rural population should be added the factors which have a differential impact on women: fewer opportunities for paid work in the rural areas, and family strategies for the expulsion of female children. The largest proportions of female migration are found in the youngest age categories and are motivated by the desire for insertion in the urban labour market. Although women migrants are not homogeneous in their social origins, the majority come from the lower rural strata. At their place of destination, the economic participation of migrants tends to be greater than in the areas of origin and greater than that of urban women. Length of residence in the urban areas lessens but does not nullify these

/initial differences

initial differences between migrants and natives. The migrants enter the urban labour market primarily as wage earners, doing non-manual and mainly non-productive jobs in domestic service, although participation in this work decreases among older migrants.17/

Available information on the structure of female employment by economic activity sector, although the geographic coverage for 1960-1970 is very incomplete, point up some phenomena which are important in considering the evolution of employment in the region. An analysis of the percentage of women in each activity sector with respect to the total economically active population of the same sectors and with respect to the total economically active population reveals that the services sector is the principal branch of activity for female employment; the other three activity sectors in which women have a sizeable participation are industry, commerce, and miscellaneous activities. In these three sectors, female participation in the total of the economically active population of each of them undergoes significant changes, probably depending on the process of development of the various countries. Finally it can be seen that the percentage distribution of women in the various activity sectors with respect to the total is extremely variable according to country, except for agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing (which decreases in all the countries) and commerce (which increases in all the countries).

The results of examining the changes which have taken place in the female participation in a sector of activity with respect to the economically active population of this same sector, and in the female participation in an activity sector with respect to the total of economically active women, for industry, commerce, services and unspecified activities, point to a dynamic situation which is not normally taken into account: the commerce sector has a tendency towards high feminization, since not only does it incorporate an increased proportion of women but at the same time it incorporates fewer men; in unspecified activities, although they have a tendency towards feminization, this tendency does not have the same intensity in all countries; industry has a tendency towards feminization in some countries and masculinization in others; and services, which are considered traditionally as women's activity, show a tendency towards masculinization in some countries.

For a better understanding of the meaning of the dynamics mentioned it would be necessary to carry out case studies which would include all the sectors of activity, the changes which have occurred in the economic structure of the countries and the characteristics and conditions of female employment.

If services are divided into sectors, a significant proportion of women working in them -and also of economically active women- are domestic employees.

Paid domestic service continues to be a "typically" or almost exclusively female occupation, and its demand is fairly elastic and very fluid. Migrant women from the rural areas under 20 years of age and with an average education lower than that of working class women but higher than that of peasants tend to work in this occupation. The wages are very low, due to the lack of skills and continual flow of women from the rural areas. The system in which domestic employees live in the same house as the employers implies a very long work day, greater integration with the persons for whom they work, fewer possibilities of

/organizing an

organizing an independent life, forming their own family group and participating in union-type activities. Interaction with the persons for whom they work leads them to identify with the values of the latter, which makes it difficult for them to perceive their own interests. In the system in which domestic employees do not live in the same home as the employers, the possibilities increase for an independent life, forming their own family group and participating in union-type activities. But here also the difficulty arises of making this extra-domestic work compatible with the responsibility for carrying out activities in their own domestic unit.

Comparing the percentage of women in the various occupational categories in 1963-1977 with the total of economically active women, it can be seen that in most of the countries of the region, wage earners, whether workers or employees, predominate among women who work. In second place are women who work as employers or on their own account. Except in two countries, unpaid family workers represent a small percentage. However, workers in the so-called "other occupations and undefined categories" reach significant percentages in various countries of the region. Unfortunately, the information available places women who are employers and own-account workers in the same group, in cases where there is information that the latter constitute a much higher percentage than that of the former. If this were the case, we would be witnessing the creation of self-employment whose characteristics are important for discussion of the labour options of women.

The participation of women in the various occupational strata synthesizes, in a way, the characteristics considered up to now. In the region, by 1970, of the total number of economically active women, 31.8% were located in the middle and upper strata, in secondary and tertiary occupations. Within these, figures of some significance correspond to employees, saleswomen and subordinate personnel in industry, commerce and services (13.7%) and dependent professionals (11.1%). The greatest propensity to work, in women with some educational level, is shown in this stratum. In second place, in decreasing order, are women in lower occupational strata, in tertiary activities (27.4%), including workers in services, either wage earners, own-account or unpaid family workers. Here appears the largest volume of domestic workers. In third place, still in decreasing order, are women in the category called "others" (14.0%), which brings out the great variety of occupations in which women work, many of them difficult to classify in standard categories. In fourth place are women in lower occupational strata, in primary and extractive activities (11.5%), including rural workers, either wage earners, own-account, non-employer or unpaid family. Finally, in insignificant proportions (0.2%) is the stratum of the workers in middle and upper occupations in primary activities. As may be observed, when a woman enters the labour market, her possibilities of finding herself in one occupational stratum or another tend to differ radically from those of men.

Although in general terms, the propensity for women to work increases as the educational level increases, this does not mean that this trend is shown in the various occupational strata, in relation to men of the same stratum. The differences are noteworthy among strata and among countries. On the contrary, in general terms, the average number of years of schooling for women, in each occupational stratum, tends to be fewer than that of men.

/(d) Female

(d) Female unemployment

Information is available on the rate of female unemployment for only seven countries of the region around 1970. According to these partial data, there is probably no clear trend in the evolution of female unemployment, which makes it difficult to try to generalize and will require more in-depth studies of national cases. Thus, when the rate of unemployment is relatively high, the female rate is much higher than the male rate; when it is moderate, it is significantly higher for women than for men in some cases, and the trend is reversed in others; finally, when the rate is low, the differences are minimal and in only one case does the rate of female unemployment exceed that of males.

There is also no clear trend in the evolution of rates of unemployment if we analyse by sex and educational level. However, as educational levels rise the relative differences tend to decrease. There are cases of low rates of unemployment and lower female unemployment, in which the latter is always lower, whatever the level of education, except in the group between 10 and 12 years of schooling in one country and that of 13 years and over in another, in which it is higher than that of men; or there are cases with moderate rates and higher female unemployment than male, in which this relationship maintains whatever the education level, although here also, as the ecucational level rises, the relative differences tend to decrease; or, in another case, the female unemployment rate is lower or equal to the male rate until the sixth year of schooling, and beyond that it is greater than that of males.

If the analysis is done according to the area of residence of the women, the higher their education, the lower their unemployment rate tends to be, showing a sort of "continuum" which goes from women with a higher level of education and residents of the capital, to women without any education or with complete primary and residents of rural areas.

If the analysis is done by taking into account the urbanization process as well, the supposed relationship according to which, as urbanization and education increase, the female unemployment rate decreases and differences are fewer in comparison with male unemployment only appears clear in situations of low urbanization and relatively little development of the educational system. In cases of intermediate urbanization and relatively average educational development, the tendencies are dissimilar, although there is a certain tendency towards female unemployment being greater than male in rural zones.

In the region, around 1970, the rates of open unemployment among youth between 20 and 29 years of age show that, if we consider the total for the country, men who had up to six years of education or 13 years and over show lower unemployment rates than those of women. On the other hand, between seven and 12 years of schooling, female rates were lower than male rates. This suggests that the relationship between the educational level and the open unemployment rate might not be lineal, which would be explained on the one hand by the requirements of demand, and on the other by aspirations to obtain certain types of jobs, in accordance with the educational levels reached. This different behaviour for both sexes could be the basis of the lack of a clear trend for the two sexes and the total by country.

/Still, for

Still, for the total of the countries and for the two sexes, while in the urban zones (capital or remaining urban) there is a trend towards young people having lower open unemployment rates as their education grows, this trend becomes less clear in the rural areas, except for those with 13 years and more of education.

For young women, the rates of open unemployment are usually higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Well known is the effect that domestic employment may have between the two areas, especially for less educated women. This relationship appears clearly among young people with less education (up to complete primary). With an education of 7 years and more, whatever the area, open unemployment of young women tends to grow as the level of education grows. Again the phenomenon appears which places in doubt the linear nature of the relationship between education and area of residence for women: residents of the capitals, with 7 to 9 years of schooling have a relatively much lower unemployment rate than that of rural women with 13 years and more of education.

These open unemployment trends among youth are important because of the high percentage of total open unemployment it represents.

(e) Sexual stereotypes and the economic participation of women and its consequences

In the reciprocal reinforcement which occurs between the participation of women in work in general and in extra-domestic work in particular, on the one hand, and the behaviours of the same women in regard to this participation, on the other, there is ample room for the phenomenon of sexual stereotypes, which is shown in many ways.

In general, employers say that they do not have prejudices against hiring women, but in practice, at the time of choosing their personnel, they prefer men. The reasons they give are: additional costs (maintenance of child care centres, for example) and possible upsets in production due to maternity leave, absence for doing domestic errands, difficulties in working overtime. In addition, they argue that they usually do not promote female staff because women are not usually endowed with abilities in the area of management, organization and planning.

Women, for their part, due to their early socialization and the domestic division of labour by sex and age, are conditioned to accept their role in society (developing more passive personality features) and to accept a certain submission to men. It is thus understandable that they prefer the occupations they have traditionally held, due to the cultural conditioning they have received and the possibilities of work offered to them by the society. They therefore select jobs in which they know they will be welcome and which do not set them up against activities which are socially defined as feminine.

It has been held that women's motives for working vary according to their socioeconomic level: at the lower level, this would basically be wages; at the middle level, the economic independence and contribution to the family income; and at the higher level, personal and professional realization. However, this association between motives and socioeconomic strata may be conditioned by the marital status, number and age of children, condition as head of household, etc. Research on this subject is scarce, and in many cases the possible answers

/offered to

offered to respondents also reflect the stereotypes of the researchers and do not usually grant them much freedom.

As for the acceptance or rejection of female extra-domestic work, according to a study done in poor urban sectors in Chile, although the responses of men and women differ in the absolute value of percentages, they have the same structure; that is, they both reflect an unfavourable attitude towards female work outside the home, although it is more unfavourable among men than among women. Similarly, although they differ in percentages, the order of importance of the answers regarding the reasons for which female work is accepted outside the home is the same for men and women. The problem appears to focus on the possibility of making domestic work compatible with work outside the home.18/

On the other hand, in a study done among primary teachers in Brazil, it was found that their husbands supported the idea of women working outside the home, although their attitude was certainly more favourable in regard to single women than to married women without or with children, in that order. The rejection of women's working outside the home was less significant, and referred almost exclusively to married women with or without children. Noteworthy were the low figures shown in relation to whether the economic participation of women should depend upon the financial situation of the home. If the attitude of these men (possibly of the urban middle strata) is compared with that of men from the urban poor strata, there is a clear contrast with respect to the economic participation of women and their corresponding stereotypes.19/

There is general agreement that women receive less pay than men for similar work, although there are few studies on this topic. Normally this fact is attributed to the discrimination which exists in the labour market with respect to women and the minimal ability of the latter to organize for the purpose of making demands. A frequently ignored aspect is the perception of these women with regard to the fairness of the pay they receive. On this subject there is almost no information, but it has been found that while only 2.3% of primary teachers consider they receive a fair wage, 79.6% of women wage earners consider their wage fair.20/ Criteria for evaluating the social goods they receive also enter into play here, and it is well known that these criteria have a relationship with membership and reference groups and with social visibility. The differences in opinion with respect to the fairness of their wage between women primary teachers and wage earners are so great that they cannot be due solely to the absolute amounts of these wages. Comparisons are being made on the greater visibility of other social groups available to teachers and which are based on the fact that their reference groups are higher socioeconomic sectors.

There is also agreement that women are discriminated against in management jobs, but there has been no research on whether this treatment applies in relation to opportunities for doing these jobs or to access to the careers leading to them. There has been little research on the perceptions of men and women of various class situations with regard to the existence of professions in which sex is either relevant or irrelevant. In any case, the interpretation of the answers obtained in surveys conducted for this purpose is a difficult task and should take into account the following: the objective characteristics of the professions and the symbolic significance they may acquire in the various social strata; the visibility of different professions to these strata; the probability

/that those

that those interviewed are only verbalizing stereotypes which have little to do with their actual social practices.

Despite these difficulties in interpretation and explanation, the study done 21/ on 20 professions among women teachers and wage earners and their respective spouses shows that there are different opinions with respect to the professions suited to men, women or persons of both sexes, according to class situation, and within each of the latter, similar or divergent opinions between men and women.

As a summary it may be said that the characteristics of female work are of interest not only from the point of view of the current situation of women and the degree of the equality of opportunities existing for men and women. The projections of the rates of economic participation of young people between 20 and 24 years of age from 1970 to the year 2000 reveal a clear tendency towards a certain relative decline in male employment and an increase -also relative- in female employment. The existence of large contingents of young, more educated women, in a context of modernization which implies that female labour will be desirable for women and socially legitimate, presents a great challenge to the countries of the region.

These projections referring to the total female population are a cause for concern in themselves, and even more so in that they include a great heterogeneity of situations.

From what has been expressed in this section, it may be concluded that, at one extreme, women are found with a low tendency to participate in the labour market, namely: women from 20 to 24 years of age, with incomplete primary educatio with a partner, who are not heads of household, with two or more children, or rural residents. At the other extreme are found women of 40 to 44 years of age, with higher education, without a partner, heads of household, without children, and urban residents. Between the two extremes there exists a diversity of situations in the supply of female labour which involves contingents of women of varying numerical volume.

For the women who are located in each one of these situations, the demand for female labour opens various possibilities for their entering the labour market and becoming incorporated into one or another activity sector, category of occupation or occupational stratum. They also have various opportunities of remaining in the labour market, leaving it and reincorporating or learning an occupational career.

As a result, the future trends of economic participation of women, as well as their volume, intensity and level, will result from the evolution of the supply and demand of female labour.

However, employment policies for women are not limited to the dimensions of supply and demand, since with respect to them there are other factors of singular importance, namely: the persistence or modification of sexual stereotypes, on the one hand, and on the other, the extension, coverage and efficiency of social services associated with the production, reproduction and maintenance of the population and the consequent redefinition of domestic work.

Besides the policies oriented specifically towards improving the situation of women in the labour market, account should certainly be taken of the behaviour of the various economic agents in relation to the growing supply of female labour. In some activity sectors in some countries of the region, the economic incorporation of women has had a depressive effect on wages.

/3. Health

3. Health

The Regional Plan of Action states that, in the area, the health problem is alarming and that most of the population lives in unhealthy conditions, undernourished, ignorant of the elementary standards of hygiene and without access to health resources because of the unjust distribution of wealth. Because of the special care they need during pregnancy, childbirth and lactation, women, together with children, are worst affected by the situation. There is also the problem of the increasing cost of medicines and the monopolistic control exercised over them by the transnational enterprises as well as the shortage of available and suitable medical resources. In order to overcome this situation, the Plan proposes, inter alia, the following measures: to make the population aware of its right to health; to provide free access to health services; to broaden the medical and paramedical infrastructure and services; to formulate programmes to reduce mortality among mothers and babies by improving nutrition, hygiene and health services for mothers and children and by educating parents; to guarantee free access to medicines; and to encourage governments to prepare the necessary statistical data. This approach was ratified at the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America.22/

In addition, the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace enumerates various objectives and priority actions in relation to the subject of health.23/

The International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade affirms that an important objective of the international community is the achievement by the year 2000 of a level of health which will enable all the peoples of the world to have a socially and economically productive life. It also proposes that by the year 1990 drinking water and adequate sanitary facilities should be made available for all persons living in rural and urban areas. It establishes that the reduction in mortality rates will be an important goal, that infant mortality should be reduced to less than 120 per 1 000 live births and that by the year 2000 life expectancy should reach a minimum of 60 years of age and the infant mortality rate a maximum of 50 per 1 000 live births. It also proposes greater access by women to health services.24/

For their part, the governments of the region have resolved to undertake actions aimed at improving the health conditions of the population.25/

Although the concepts of health and sickness vary historically and according to the various cultures, their most used indicators (life expectancy at birth, morbidity, various mortality rates) show a clear association with the overall level of development of the societies and with the different class situations and areas of residence of each society. The level of health is conditioned by the availabilit of drinking water, quality of housing, environmental sanitation, education, social security, employment, income and basically, malnutrition. Also involved are cultural elements such as purchases and values, attitudes towards the medical professions, preference for traditional healers, etc.

The differential situation of the population needing health services, either by rural or urban area of residence or by their living conditions or income levels, is taken care of by a structure of health services whose supply completes the circuit of need satisfaction in this area.

The structure of health services predominating in the region follows the model of the industrialized countries: curative, private medicine with very specialized hospitals concentrated in urban areas. Curative care invests almost

/all expenditure

all expenditure on restoring health, ignoring prevention and early diagnosis. Such characteristics point up an economic option which has social, political and cultural implications: high cost of some care for a very few, and little or no care for a large part of the population. The stabilization policies which have been applied by some countries of the region in the face of world economic trends have caused to deteriorate even further the health circuits in which the lowest-income sectors participate, especially the rural sectors.

In the 1960s, out of 25 countries of the region, only three had more than 10 doctors per 10 000 inhabitants, whereas 12 of them did not even have 5 doctors per 10 000 inhabitants. These figures were even lower for dentists. Even if these figures have increased significantly, the situation will continue to be deficient in the great majority of the countries of the region.

Moreover, out of 19 countries of the region, only six had more than two beds per 1 000 inhabitants in the whole country, excluding the capital, and only in one of those was the figure greater than in the capital. By 1971, in eight out of 10 countries of the region, 50% or more of the population residing in areas with less than 2 000 inhabitants lacked minimal health services.

It can be seen from the preceding paragraphs that the situation is generally one of inadequacy, and that although there are great differences among the countries the deficiency is greater in the rural areas.

The situation is becoming worse because of the limited scope of social security benefits, which especially affects women belonging to the domestic units of the rural wage earners, small-scale agricultural producers and the informal urban sector who are generally excluded from these benefits.

In view of the above, the regional health figures are not surprising. Between 1975 and 1980, in six out of 30 countries of the region, women's life expectancy at birth was less than 60 years. It was the same for men in eight countries, and for both sexes, this was the life expectancy at birth for six countries. In the 30 countries, the general rule was that the life expectancy of women is greater than that of men.

The situation is relatively better with respect to the objectives of the International Development Strategy in regard to the mortality rate for children under one year of age in 1975-1980. In only three out of 30 countries of the region did the rate exceed 120 per thousand for men, and in only two was it above this rate for women. In only two countries, which are having serious development problems,26/ was this rate higher for both sexes.

As regards morbidity, the most frequent causes of death in the region are illnesses related to nutritional deficiencies, typhoid, dysentery, cholera, polio and hepatitis; illnesses relating to the contamination of food, drink, water or soil by human waste, because of inadequate sanitation and water supply conditions; respiratory infections, pneumonia and influenza. The causes of death in women are identified with special health problems: diabetes mellitus, vitamin deficiency and other nutritional deficiencies and anemias. Among these causes should be included abortion, although its illegality makes it difficult to support this with figures. According to other studies, abortion has been growing at a more rapid rate than the population, and high rates of morbidity and mortality per induced abortion are reported. Another cause which seems to have a significant impact, especially because women tend not to declare the illness for cultural reason is venereal disease. Special attention should be drawn to the situation of child-birth in relation to so-called high-risk pregnancy, due to the young age of the mother, her malnutrition and lack of health, high number or frequency of pregnancies

/loss of

loss of fetuses, or marital status. As regards the age of the mother, it should be noted that 13% of all the mothers of the region are under 20 years old. The incidence of the frequency of pregnancies increases beginning with the fifth child, which is important in the region -particularly in rural areas- because of the high fertility rate. The nutritional and educational situation has already been mentioned. Another cause of the high risk is in the single marital status of the mother, a situation which has worsened in the region: in one country, single mothers account for 43% of single women 15 years of age and over; and in another, single mothers account for 27% of the total population of single women; and in the Caribbean, approximately 50% of single women are mothers.

The high infant mortality rate is also an indicator that there are health problems in the mother. Although the latter are concerned about the health of their children, the possibilities of influencing congenital characteristics are very limited once the child is born. In addition to the actions aimed at improving mothers' health, there is a broad field of activities oriented towards their improving the health care of their children: encouragement of breast feeding, in view of its nutritional value and its influence on reducing diarrheal infections and other types; training in the recognition of symptoms of disease, basic household treatments, adequate nutrition, supervision of the child's development, illness prevention measures through the improvement of the household environment, etc.

Maternal mortality has declined, although the rates are still high and in four countries of the region exceed 20 per 10 000 births. One cause of this situation may lie in the deficient care at childbirth in the rural zones, particularly in those where an indigenous population predominates.

For these cases, as for other situations, it has been proposed that there should be development of primary health care, with the participation of the communities themselves. This idea may be very useful for basic treatments, recognition of symptoms, general preventive measures, environmental sanitation, etc. But if constant professional assistance is not provided, inequalities of access to health services may become institutionalized.

Bearing in mind that the factors influencing the health of the population are complex and interrelated, it is difficult to foresee a substantial change in the near future. However, migrations from the country to the city and the spreading of lifestyles which lead to modernization may improve the aggregate indicators at the national level.

4. Housing

According to the Regional Plan of Action, the housing deficit in Latin America is calculated at 20 million units, which makes the prospect of it an immediate solution problematical. It points out that the improvement of the availability of housing requires a combination of suitable economic and social policies, aimed at the production and renovation of housing for low-income groups, which should be accompanied by an increase in government services providing water and electricity supply, transportation, sewage services and road systems. It states that the programmes should facilitate self-help efforts, especially in the case of women who are heads of households, and that women should participate in the organization and execution of such efforts. With this approach, it proposes a series of measures which include the following objectives: to guarantee the right of citizens to housing; to plan and finance the design of human settlements, both urban and rural, taking into account the needs of the entire population and women's

/full participation

full participation in this process as the basic users of the houses; to design housing so that it takes into account the needs of the family, encouraging the use of material which requires minimum maintenance; equipment and utensils which do not represent a danger to users; all that makes the construction and use of housing more economical and functional; the use of local raw materials in house construction; and, finally, to encourage self-help housing programmes and to facilitate the participation of women in these programmes.27/

The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace includes among the priority spheres of action in the area of health the development of national and local programmes aimed at improving hygienic, sanitation and housing conditions and the access to self-sufficiency in drinking water.28/

The International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade holds that one long-term objective is the provision of housing and basic infrastructure for all persons in rural and urban areas.29/

In addition, the governments of the region have proposed that actions oriented towards integrating women into the economic and social development of Latin America should tend, inter alia, to improve the situation of housing and infrastructure.30/

According to the available information, the regional situation in these areas was the following in the years indicated:

- The percentage of the population living in slums and spontaneous housing in some countries of Latin America in 1969, 1970, 1971 and 1974 was, to say the least, high. In view of the intensity of the urbanization process in the region this percentage acquires even more alarming proportions.

- The number of persons per room in the urban areas of nine countries of the region in 1960 was in no case less than or equal to one. Although the situation improved during the 1970s, in the urban zones of various countries there were nearly two or more persons per room.

- By 1965 and 1973, the percentage of the population having drinking water available both in urban zones and in rural zones rose in almost all the countries of the region. However, in the rural areas only six countries showed a percentage higher than 50%; in another six countries the percentage fluctuated between 30% and 50%, and this figure was below 30% in twelve countries. However, not all the houses were connected to the drinking water supply system.

- The availability of electricity in houses presents a similar panorama, although between 1960 and 1970, according to what is recorded in the countries where it is possible to make comparisons, progress is slowly being made.

- The percentage of the total urban population served by sewage systems is really low, since only in seven of the 21 countries was it equal to or higher than 50% in 1977. In the same year, the situation was even more serious in the rural areas, since out of 16 countries, in only one was this service available to nearly 80% of the population; in two the figure was between 12% and 17%, and in the rest more than 90% of the rural population lacked this service.

If the domestic units, and within them women, are responsible for the reproduction and maintenance of the life of the population and in the majority of cases it is the women who carry out the relevant jobs, a knowledge of the living conditions (quality, occupancy, equipment) and the access to basic infrastructure services is essential for an understanding of the way in which domestic work is carried out and how it conditions the quality of life of the population, especially that of women.

/Housing in

Housing in the poorest urban sectors may be grouped into three major types, according to their situation.

Precarious settlements. These are generally a product of the occupation of land located on the periphery of cities, so that the residents live with the threat of eviction, a situation of insecurity which has a special impact on women. The housing units are very close to one another, and are constructed by the inhabitants themselves with discarded materials. The promiscuity which this leads to, and the precarious shelter it offers, especially affect women and children. Most of these settlements obtain water from one or two faucets which serve the entire population and, instead of a sewage system, blind drains are used, sometimes in common. Given these circumstances, the sanitary conditions are poor and the population is exposed to diarrhea and parasite infections, as well as epidemics. The housing units shelter many persons, which results in overcrowding and increases the possibilities of contagion. There is little access to public services (doctors, shcools, telephones, police, etc.). Their location with respect to work places implies high costs in money and time, in crowded means of transport. Opportunities for women to find some source of income in the precarious settlement itself are very few. If they find work in domestic service or self-employment as street vendors, they must leave their homes for many hours, and they are unable to attend to the domestic chores, care of children and security of their few belongings, and are thus constantly preoccupied. Their social ties, often close and necessary in order to set up network of solidarity which make it possible for them to face their difficult living conditions, tend to transmit knowledge, information, values, attitudes and lifestyles appropriate to this social context. It is not unusual to find various forms of aggressiveness and insecurity, the existence of youth gangs, prostitution and alcoholism. The presence of a man, as a source of security, is necessary to women of these settlements. The income of these domestic units and their equipment are minimal.

Slum neighbourhoods. These include tenements, cramped row houses or similar form of housing. In general they are located in the oldest areas of the cities, and they house one family per room with common use of sanitary facilities and kitchen. These inconveniences and overcrowding are compensated for, to some extent, by the access to urban services and the relative proximity to sources of income and work.

Building site and services programmes. These are building sites provided by the government with minimal infrastructure services. The residents have legal security in the holding of the land and maintain relatively organized contacts with government services. Since these are generally located in the periphery of the cities, they do not facilitate female work outside the home. With the growing financial difficulties of the governments, however, the conditions in which this type of solution is offered have been deteriorating, both with respect to the quality of housing and the constructed surface area.

Depending on government policies and the different opportunities for financing, the urban middle sectors with stable jobs and a sufficient income have available to them various housing solutions, including relatively completely equipped houses.

The housing conditions of the high-income urban strata and the circuits through which they satisfy their housing needs are too well known and visible in any Latin American capital to go any further into details.

The housing of the medium-scale agricultural producer is usually in good condition, both in surface area and in materials. Its equipment also tends to be relatively complete. The type of human settlement in which it is located results in some isolation and less access to public services.

/The housing

The housing of the small-scale producer and the rural wage earner presents even more deficient characteristics than those described for precarious urban settlements. The situation of women is made even worse by the difficulties they have in obtaining water and fuel, the scant possibility of finding any paid work and the scattered nature of rural settlements which especially blocks access to services of various types.

An even more serious problem is posed by the eradication of the precarious settlements and slums. It has been said that the eradication of slum neighbourhoods may make sense from the economic point of view, since it frees land for profitable relocation, but it complicates the problem of housing for the poor. Eradication not only eliminates the investments which the residents and householders have been able to make but also upsets the vital social and economic relations on which the poor depend.31/ In these situations the poor tend to take refuge in the homes of relatives or friends as house guests or in a room constructed in the backyard, sharing the capacity of the domestic unit in which they are housed. The ones who suffer most from this situation are the women and children.

The problem in housing and basic infrastructure services really shows the differences existing between the circuits of need satisfaction to which the domestic units of the various class situations have access, and their influence on the quality of life of the members, particularly on the situation of women.

It might thus be concluded that there is no such thing as "the" situation of "women" in relation to "the" problem of housing, and that this situation must be specified according to groups of women: women from the middle and upper sectors do not appear to have acute housing problems, whereas women from the poor rural and urban strata do appear to have serious ones. But this conclusion would be inadequate, in view of the following: (a) women who do not have problems and those who do are members and citizens of the same society which, in view of the predominant style of development, has preferred this solution to other more equitable ones; (b) any attempt to solve the problems of housing and infrastructure services of the women who suffer from them and who constitute a large contingent of the population of the countries of the region cannot be carried out without affecting the situation of the other women in the society, since such an attempt implies reallocating goods and services, as well as public and private resources, destined for the sector. This struggle, although hidden, brings out the fact that any policy designed to improve the situation of women, like any other social policy, has conflictive aspects which cannot be ignored.

5. Political participation

According to the Regional Plan of Action, women represent about half of the Latin American electorate, yet only 3% of them form part of legislative bodies and an even smaller proportion form part of executive bodies. It points out that as a result women do not participate in decision-making, their opinions are neglected and their needs are not taken into account in the planning of development. For this reason, it states that efforts must be made so that in practice women have the same rights and opportunities as men to vote and participate in public and private life, with an understanding of their responsibilities as citizens and guaranteeing of their rights so that they may participate in the solution of the problems which affect the society in general and those which affect them directly as women. To achieve these objectives, a series of measures is proposed, inter alia: to support and promote the participation of women in political activities on an equal footing

/with men;

with men; to create awareness among women of the importance of their participation in political activity at all levels; to encourage women to run for public and elective offices; to apply measures so that women will have opportunities for political training; to demand women's representation on all commissions, boards and corporations of regional and international organizations, as well as greater participation in the delegations designated by governments for international and regional conferences and forums.32/ The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, for its part, has recommended that women should participate with a greater sense of commitment in trade-union organizations and, through the women's or mixed organizations to which they belong, in the implementation of the action programmes aimed at achieving their integration into social, political and economic development. It also recommends promoting the local popular organizations which strengthen the democratic principles of equality and social justice.33/

The International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade affirms as one of the objectives that of achieving the participation of women on an equal footing with men as agents and beneficiaries of development.34/

The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace proposes a series of actions for achieving the participation of women in political processes and other decision-making processes, as well as in the effort at developing international co-operation and strengthening peace.35/

The indicators of participation, whether female or male, present difficulties not only in regard to their reliability and validity but also in that they are incomplete, because of the various forms of institutions in which people participate.

The principal difficulties which female participation has to face appear to be found, on the one hand, in the sexual stereotypes according to which the responsibility for and execution of domestic activities correspond to women -stereotypes which are recognized, accepted and even defended by women themselves-; and, on the other hand, in the very conditions in which these activities are performed and to which, in increasing numbers, must be added the dual burden signified by paid work.

There is another frequently ignored aspect: the nature of the call for political participation in relation to the object of this call, or women themselves. They are usually invited to participate in global processes, associated with national and international projects in which the world of domestic work, the social organization of the maintenance and reproduction of the population and its quality of life appear to be secondary. The contribution and challenge presented by the proposals to achieve the participation of women in political and trade-union life consist of emphasizing all the efforts that must be made to relate any policy (investment, nationalization or transnationalization of the economy, its opening or protectionism, dependence or national liberation, etc.) to its implications for the quality of life of the population.

In the region, participation of women in public and elective office, as well as in the government apparatus and political parties, has increased. However, it is still not enough, and very few countries have full or more than minimal participation levels (approximately 10% of candidatures and 5% of elective offices). It is very probable that this level will continue to rise because of the combined effect of the increase in the educational levels of women, the lessening importance of sexual stereotypes in this area and women's participation itself, although the stereotypes as well as the responsibility for and carrying out of domestic chores remain a serious obstacle. Thus, unless deliberate actions intervene, the

/participation of

participation of women who are urban, educated and exempt (for one reason or another) from domestic work, that is women of the urban middle and upper strata, will continue to grow.

There has also been an increase in participation of women from all social strata in women's organizations focused on concrete interests. Groups of professional women, mothers' centres in the popular districts, groups for the production and marketing of crafts, etc., are women's organizational options which show growing participation in the region.

The participation of women has not been limited to exclusively female organizations, and there is an increasing presence of women from different socio-economic strata in professional associations, trade-unions and neighbourhood associations established to improve infrastructure services or living conditions in the so-called marginal populations.

6. Legislation and administrative machinery

The Regional Plan of Action recognizes that legislative measures alone are not sufficient to ensure the equality of women, but it points out that the elimination of all discriminatory norms opens the way to equality. It also maintains that de facto discrimination has its basis and effectiveness in de jure discrimination and that it is urgent to take measures of a legal nature that ensure the legal equality of the sexes. In order to achieve these objectives it proposes, inter alia: to revise existing legislation in order to eliminate those aspects that affect the legal and social status of women; to adopt legislative measures that ensure women's full legal equality with men; to ratify the international agreements and treaties on women's status and put them into practice. It recognizes the need to create adequate machinery for the purpose of accelerating the achievement of the global, regional and national plans and policies within the Decade for Women.36/

The Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America has recommended that the governments should adopt as rapidly as possible the measures necessary to establish national machinery for the integration of women into development and to improve existing machinery, as well as to make a complete review of national legislation in order to achieve the following: ensure the legal equality of men and women; establish regulations governing family property and include in civil legislation provisions relevant to a family code; implement the necessary measures to ensure that women are suitably informed about all the legal and legislative aspects affecting them.37/

The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women includes, among the national strategies for accelerating the full participation of women in economic and social development, both national machinery and legislative measures, with an approach consistent with the regional provisions mentioned above.38/

Given the political evolution experienced by the countries of the region, most of them recognized the equality of political rights (citizenship, suffrage, etc.) of men and women in advance of the celebration of the International Women's Year (1975).

Based on the available information, it is difficult to evaluate the progress made in this area. In most of the responses given by governments to the questionnaire sent recently by the ECLA Secretariat, legal provisions prior to 1975 were listed. It may be concluded from this that concern for the problem already existed

/in the

in the region, but also that only in a few countries is there effective political will to continue making progress in the area.

In view of the predominant domestic and familiar role assigned to women, one of the main points is family legislation, especially on the legal situation of married women. In only a few countries do they have a legal economic, social, political and labour independence, as shown in the legislation on paternal authority, custody of children in case of separation, and the ability of women to participate in the administration of their own property and that of the conjugal union.

This situation mainly affects women of the middle and upper strata, so they are the ones who have exerted pressure to change the existing legislation.

For women in the lower urban strata, there is concern for the lack of legislation or implementation of the present legislation with respect to domestic work. Also of concern is the influence of the behaviour of the women of these strata in the labour market, since in view of their urgent need to obtain more family income they frequently accept jobs which imply lower wages than the legal minimum wages, with avoidance of social security contributions. In this way they not only act against their own interests but also exercise a depressive effect on wages, aggravating the situation of the domestic units.

These situations point up one main factor, which is the actual defense of the rights of women belonging to the most unprotected groups, that is, poor urban and rural women. In most of the countries of the region the administration of justice is costly and difficult to obtain. It is noteworthy that, although there has been a growing participation of women in university courses in juridical sciences, in only a few countries do professional women offer free legal services to other less fortunate women, in their areas of residence.

As for national machinery, although it has been established by all countries, very few systems really plan and concentrate all the activities related to the situation of women. In only a few countries have multisectoral or global mechanisms been established in the political, administrative or planning schemes. In other cases, the national administrative machinery has been located in the sphere of a ministry (labour, social welfare, health, etc.), with the result that action is sectoral and only refers to women; in other cases, the machinery that has existed for some time in the ministries of foreign relations related to relationships with international organizations has been considered sufficient. In the latter two cases, especially in the last, the scope and effectiveness of the actions taken depends on the dynamism of the responsible officials, but they clearly have few possibilities of influencing real integration of women in development.

C. NEW ASPECTS TO BE INCORPORATED: ENERGY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT

The United Nations General Assembly has urged all the regional commissions to report in full to the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session in 1982, and then every two years, on the specific aspects of the situation of women in all the sectors of their development programmes, in order to strengthen and reorient the reporting methods of those commissions so as to reflect more adequately the regional concerns of women.39/

/It also

It also requested the Secretary General to ensure that the review and appraisal of progress made in implementing the recommendations related to the mobilization of women in development of the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year and the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women is made part of the review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.40/

The evaluations made to date have been focused on the problems of education, occupation and employment, health, family, infancy, housing, participation in organizations, legislation, and administrative machinery. Evaluations have not yet been made of a series of aspects of the development programmes which were considered only partially in the Regional Plan of Action, in the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and in the Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, but which have an important place in the objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

On the evolution of the situation of women in relation to these new sectors, there is little information available for this same reason. Thus, the ECLA Secretariat has made an effort to make a first approximation of a conceptual framework and, in relation to this, to propose some initiatives aimed at reorienting and strengthening reporting methods, in order to include them in future evaluations. In order to achieve significant progress, it is important to consider critically the conceptual framework and the indicators proposed below.

1. Energy

Two major forms of energy consumption may be distinguished: direct, which corresponds to domestic units and transport of persons, and indirect, which is the consumption of enterprises in the social production of goods and services. Although there has been no clear establishment of the percentage of total energy consumed by households, some indications are that it is relatively high. In the first place, the traditional sources of energy are still playing an important role in the region. Firewood, in particular, and plant waste possibly exceed 25% of the primary energy consumed,41/ and probably almost all of this consumption corresponds to the domestic sector. In the second place, it is estimated that the consumption of electricity by households fluctuates between 20% and 25% of total consumption of this energy.42/ Thus, domestic consumption probably constitutes approximately 40% of total energy consumption. However, despite its importance, there are no special provisions made in this area,43/ in circumstances where because of the size of its participation it should be taken into account in planning the production of energy and its uses.

The energy crisis has an impact on domestic units and, through them, affects the situation of women in various ways.

In the rural zones of the predominantly agricultural countries which import energy resources, the crisis will most probably mean a continued use of traditional energy; and the job of obtaining it, at increasingly long distances, will continue to be the responsibility of women and children. On the other hand, the exhaustion of fairly close sources may lead to the marketing of firewood or charcoal and increase the need for monetary income of the domestic units, which in turn will reinforce the probabilities that temporary or permanent migrations will take place.

/The maintenance

The maintenance of this source of energy for the domestic units of the small-scale producer and rural wage earner would mean there would be no change in the conditions in which domestic work is carried out.

Occasionally, projects for developing hydroelectric energy and the construction of dams have implied the eradication of the resident population in the area to be covered by the water, and this has not always resulted in an improvement of the situation of women and domestic units. On the one hand, the residents lose the investment they have made and, on the other, the social and economic networks around which they have built their lives are disturbed. Both facts usually are offset by programmes of integrated rural development. In these cases the man is often the owner of the land, and receives training and the benefit of credits and loans which are not often provided to domestic units which do not fit the model of the typical family, particularly domestic units with a female head of household. Moreover, although the situation of these units may improve in various ways, often there is no provision in those programmes for attention to the possible cultural and psychological maladjustments which may be produced by the new situation.

The rise in the cost of electrical energy and public urban and suburban transport has been especially noteworthy in countries which have set up economic stabilization policies which seek to reduce public expenditure and the deficit in government enterprises. This situation is becoming even worse in the countries which import energy resources. The impact of this behaviour of energy and transport prices on the domestic units of the low-income urban strata is very hard.

Within this conceptual framework, which tries to deal with the problems created by the generation of energy resources as well as the impact of the energy crisis on the domestic units of the various class situations and, through them, the situation of women, the following indicators may be useful:

(a) the extension of the electrification network to rural sectors;

(b) the number of households served by the various types of energy;

(c) the evolution of the prices of public passenger services, particularly urban and suburban lines;

(d) the evolution of the cost of residential consumption of electricity;

(e) the evolution of family consumption of electricity by area of residence; and

(f) the number of household appliances in the home.

The information may be obtained from the enterprises which provide the corresponding services, or from censuses and household surveys. The latter will make it possible to break down households according to range of income.

2. Science and technology

Although there are some references to the need for technology transfers to adapt to the requirements of the recipient countries 44/ and that technologies should be developed which increase the productivity of domestic work, reduce the working time of women and allow rural women to improve their small, traditional industries,45/ the primary approach in this field appears to centre on the creation of increasingly capital-intensive means of production and the development of a science applied to such ends. Thus, there has been a historical imbalance between the central and peripheral countries in the sense that the former concentrate on the creation, application, dissemination and control of applied science and technology.

/Technology transfer

Technology transfer and the presence of its principal agents, transnational corporations, have had effects on all the economic activities (production, marketing, consumption) on all sectors of the economy and on the most diverse manifestations of social and cultural life, from the changes in class structure to the predominance and dissemination of consumer values in the various social groups. These multiple effects have had a direct or indirect influence on the situation of women. They have allowed some groups of women to incorporate into the modern sector of consumption and some women to enter the modern sector of production; they have motivated the great majority of women to modify their personal and family life strategies as a function of the possibility of incorporating themselves into that sector; and they have led many others to a growing and relative impoverishment.

As regards the areas most directly related to the reproduction and maintenance of the population and its quality of life, technology transfer has followed the general lines of the predominant styles of development in the region, and thus has tended to increase the differences in the circuits of need satisfaction with respect to education, health, food, etc. There is still no sign of a transfer of massive and low cost technology aimed at providing the majority of the population with adequate housing, drinking water, energy, waste elimination systems, literacy, health care, etc. Still lacking is the circulation and dissemination among the population of the rudiments of the scientific method and some of its basic principles. Thus, the recommendation to develop medium-range technologies designed to improve the subsistence conditions of a considerable part of the population may lead to the institutionalization of the currently existing inequalities.

In view of the close link which exists between the process of development in Latin America and the transfer of technologies, in order to specify the situation of women in this area the following indicators could be used:

- the evolution of the production and sale of household appliances;
- the number of household appliances in the home;
- the evolution of female enrolment in scientific and technical careers, their performance and opportunities for retraining;
- the employment of women in the modern sectors of the economy: possibilities of access and permanence, jobs they perform, wages; and
- access to means of dissemination of scientific and technological knowledge, and attitudes and values in this area.

3. The environment and human settlements

As stated in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, it is necessary to intensify research on the inter-relationships between development, environment, population and resources.46/

The Regional Plan of Action on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, for its part, proposed to the governments of the region that they should initiate changes in the agrarian structure and the consequent programme of human settlements as an essential element for improving living conditions, modifying population trends, eradicating marginality and diminishing the exodus towards the cities; rationally programme urban and rural settlements, including in their construction installations designed for collective use such as schools, health centres, nurseries, laundries, shops and recreation areas, and facilitate the supply of resources and services that the homes cannot themselves provide; eradicate unsanitary neighbourhoods and replace them by new human settlements with adequate urbanistic characteristics.47/

/A look

A look at the objectives and measures contained in the International Development Strategy mentioned above will show concepts similar to those of the Regional Plan of Action just cited.48/

The conceptual framework proposed poses challenges of a very different nature. The most serious is undoubtedly the one referring to the capacity of societies and governments of the region to put into practice such ambitious programmes. Another challenge of a very different type is that of working out the interrelationships of development, environment, population and resources; or imagining the possible indicators and gathering the information in order to make it feasible to evaluate to what extent progress has been made in achieving the proposed objectives. In this aspect it is important to keep in mind the possibility that there is a parallel between the stated policies and real processes. It would not be surprising that, while policies are being designed and formulated to adapt completely to what has been foreseen by the international forums, some public or private enterprises, by actions, omissions or tolerance (totally possible due to the lack of knowledge of the interrelations of development, environment, population and resources), are contributing to the deterioration of the environment.

On the other hand, as in the past, some processes may lead, as an unexpected result, to the achievement of the objectives. Thus, for example, between 1960 and 1970 there was a regional growth of intermediate urban centres which was sometimes more rapid than that of the capitals, and in these centres illiteracy decreased at higher rates than in the latter.49/ Similarly, despite the fact that in general terms there were no specific health and sanitation programmes for the various groups of the rural population, there was an improvement in the aggregate indicators for these regions.50/

While this situation is becoming more clear, a firm basis may be obtained for the evaluations in a series of quantitative indicators, sufficiently tested and focused on the urban and rural poor strata with respect to:

- the population living in precarious settlements and slums;
- the number of persons per room, by area of residence;
- the population having available drinking water, by area of residence and domicile connections;
- private occupied housing with available electricity;
- population served by sewage systems, by area of residence;
- quality of housing, by area of residence; and
- statistics on education and health, also by area of residence.

The information may be obtained from household surveys, population and housing censuses and the relevant ministries or divisions.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

*/ Regional Plan of Action, paragraphs 87 and 88.

**/ United Nations publication, Sales No. S.80.IV.3 and corr.

***/ General Assembly resolution 35/136, 11 December 1980.

****/ General Assembly resolution 35/56, 20 January 1981.

*****/ Women in Latin America: The situation as regards the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action (E/CEPAL/CRM.2/L.2) and Contributions to the diagnosis and promotion of the integration of women into the development of Latin America and the Caribbean (E/CEPAL/CRM.2/L.3).

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1/ Raúl Prebisch, "A critique of peripheral capitalism", CEPAL Review, Santiago, First Semester 1976, Sales No. S.76.II.G.2, pp. 7-73.

2/ Regional Plan of Action, op.cit., paragraphs 35, 37 and 38.

3/ Regional Plan of Action, op.cit., paragraph 24.

4/ United Nations, General Assembly resolution A/RES/35/56, paragraphs 46 and 51, December 1980.

5/ United Nations, Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, op.cit., paragraphs 165-194.

6/ UNESCO/ECLA/UNDP project "Desarrollo y Educación en América Latina y el Caribe", Final reports, 4, Vol. 3, chapter VIII: El desarrollo de la educación superior, Buenos Aires, November 1981, pp. 43-45.

7/ Ibid., Final reports, 1, Sociedad rural, educación y escuela, Buenos Aires, June 1981, p. 35.

8/ UNESCO/CEPAL/UNDP, Final reports, 1, op.cit., chapter V, pp. 139-155.

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11/ United Nations, General Assembly resolution A/RES/35/56, op.cit., 20 January 1981, paragraphs 8, 51, 77 and 95.

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23/ United Nations, "Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace", New York, 1980, Sales No. S.80.IV.3, paragraphs 141-164.

24/ United Nations, General Assembly resolution A/RES/35/56, "International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade", 5 December 1980, paragraphs 48 and 51.

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32/ Regional Plan of Action, op.cit., paragraphs 58, 59, 60 and 61.

33/ ECLA, Report of the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, op.cit., B. Priority areas, strategies and actions, paragraph 3.a.

34/ United Nations, General Assembly resolution A/RES/35/56, op.cit., 5 December 1980, paragraph 51.

35/ United Nations, "Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace", op.cit., paragraphs 69-82.

36/ Regional Plan of Action, op.cit., paragraphs 17, 18, 19 and 20.

37/ ECLA, "Report of the Second Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America", op.cit., paragraphs 1.d and 1.e.

38/ United Nations, "Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace", op.cit., paragraphs 52-58 for the national machinery and 59-68 for legislative measures.

39/ United Nations, General Assembly, "World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women", op.cit., paragraph 10.

40/ United Nations, General Assembly, "Effective mobilization and integration of women in development", op.cit., paragraph 3.

41/ ECLA, "Latin American development in the 1980s", op.cit., paragraph 273.

42/ ECLA, América Latina y los problemas actuales de la energía, Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1975. According to table 15, p. 56, consumption of the residential and commercial sectors was 26% of total consumption of electricity.

ECLA, "Perfil de la situación de la mujer en Bolivia", E/CEPAL/G.1190, 10 March 1982, Santiago. According to table 30, p. 65, consumption of the domestic sector was 25.8% of total electricity consumption.

43/ This is true both of General Assembly resolution 35/56 (paragraphs 126 and 127) and of the ECLA document on "Latin American development in the 1980s", op.cit., (paragraphs 55-60, 261-274 and 408).

44/ United Nations, General Assembly resolution 35/56, op.cit., paragraph 117.

/45/ United

45/ United Nations, "Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace", op.cit., paragraphs 118 and 200.f.

46/ United Nations, General Assembly resolution 35/56, op.cit., paragraph 156.

47/ Regional Plan of Action, op.cit., paragraphs 57.a, 3, 4 and 6.

48/ United Nations, General Assembly resolution 35/56, op.cit., paragraphs 49 and 156-160.

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